

Stroke victims unite to help each other on the road back

By Mildred Rauschkolb

Eight years ago, Mrs. John C. Ellsworth of Wiloughby suffered a stroke. She was only 27.

"One moment I was completely independent, a person quick in movement, a rapid talker and always eager to be up and doing," recalled Cathi Ellsworth.

"Twenty minutes later, without warning, I became

totally dependent on my husband and other people. I was paralyzed on my right side. I couldn't talk, move my arm or my leg."

A little more than a year ago, George Kellner of Parma Heights had to cut down a favorite flowering crabapple in his garden. He was shaken and angry because of the loss of the tree. Each cut made with the chain-saw

increased his resentment.

"After the tree was down, I came into the house and went to the recreation room. I tried to settle down by turning on the television.

"Suddenly I felt I was in another world. I was within reach of the set but couldn't move to turn it on. And I couldn't speak."

Kellner's wife, Wanda, wasn't home. She was re-

turning the chain-saw. Hours later, she found him on the floor in the recreation room.

"It was funny," said Kellner, "I was conscious of everything. I knew my wife was talking to me. I could hear her voice, but all her words were meaningless. And I couldn't indicate what was wrong."

"It was a frightening experience. I didn't know what to do because I did not know what had happened. I really had never seen anyone who just suffered a stroke," said Mrs. Kellner.

George Kellner made remarkable progress in overcoming his handicaps. After three months of speech therapy his language problems appear to have almost disappeared.

And therapy and exercise for his arm and leg permitted him to walk again.

Cathi Ellsworth also has made great progress. Through the use of tape recorders and hospital therapy, her language problems have been conquered. She is able to walk and drive a specially-equipped automobile.

In addition to overcoming some of their handicaps and learning to live with the others, both Mrs. Ellsworth and Kellner are now helping other stroke victims do the same.

Both are actively involved in the Cleveland Stroke Club, a group formed last June by William M. Pitts, chief of speech and audiology at Highland View Hospital, with the assistance of Jan Braverman and Jan Whitney of the Cleveland Hearing and Speech Center.

All three felt a club could provide opportunities for learning and understanding more about the physical and psychological effects of a stroke.



The Plain Dealer/Michael J. Zaremba

William M. Pitts checks a piece of equipment used as an aid in aphasia by stroke patients.



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Cathi Ellsworth is seldom without a smile. She reasons she has much to be happy about since she is able to be "up and doing" once more.