MS treatment brings hope

Maryanne Lynch balances on one leg and does a twirl to show how much she has improved since receiving treatment for Multiple Sclerosis in India. Photo by M. Giuliano

By Mary Giuliano - The Free Press
Published: September 22, 2010 3:00 PM

It’s an overcast Saturday afternoon but the Jaffray Seniors’ hall is filling quickly with people to welcome home Maryanne Lynch, Darren Robillard and Louanne Henry who have travelled to India to receive experimental surgery for Multiple Sclerosis.

People are greeting each other quietly but there is a feeling of eager anticipation in the room.

Mary Lynch checks a text message and says “they’re by MacDonald’s farm,” another half hour’s wait, this adds to the electricity in the air.

I move to where Louanne’s younger sister Christine Lightburn is reclined in a wheelchair. “I’ve had MS since I was 18 and I‘m now 42” she says quietly.

The negative effects of MS are clearly visible on Christine but she’s happy that her sister has gone for this treatment. It’s unlikely Christine can make the arduous trip but there’s always hope if this treatment works.

As we converse the TV cameras move towards the door to film as the group enters.

Maryanne walks in first then Darren and Louanne. They are sporting smiles from ear to ear.

When each has been hugged tightly by family I get to look at their faces. I expected that they would be exhausted after a 30-hour trip. Instead they look rested.

The sparkle in their eyes and faces shocks me because I had been told that when they left they had not been feeling well. For two hours I follow the interaction between them and their families watching as tears visibly flow with air so emotionally charged that I find tears clouding my vision.

Jaquie Boreen has come in to join them. Jaquie travelled to Mexico in August to receive the same treatment.

Rick Lightburn, Louanne’s dad introduces the four who didn’t know each other well previously but now have bonded strongly. It’s difficult to keep them sitting.

Maryanne balances on one leg and does a twirl for me to show how much she has improved. “I could never do this before” she says.

Jaquie moves fingers to thumb - something she couldn’t do before. Darren speaks about how well they were treated, mentions how the treatment was administered while they were awake, how they felt immediate results.

They know they still have MS, don’t know how long these benefits will last, regardless they have gotten a respite from suffering and most of all they have hope. Hope that perhaps their lives have finally taken a turn for the better.

From my heart to yours best wishes for unsurpassed good health from now on, it was a privilege to be at your homecoming.