

CHUCK SPERRY RETURNS TO S&D

I'm back! The last time you may have seen me was when I was working on the Washington Lee High School project installing drains around their pool. As many of you may know, I have had a 10 year battle fighting Myelo Fibrosis, otherwise known as blood cancer. I had to leave Shapiro & Duncan in 2011 to undergo a bone marrow transplant. My brother, Bobby Sperry (whom I will forever be grateful), who was also another Shapiro & Duncan employee was my donor.

My surgery took place at INOVA Fairfax Hospital. For the first two months, I could barely move and taking 10 steps at a time was a very difficult task to complete. I traveled to the doctors every day. On Saturdays and Sundays for 6 months I also needed to receive many blood transfusions and was hospitalized a few times in between. Some days my immune system was so low that the only place I could go were to doctor appointments.

Through these dark days, my wife, faith, and my family helped me pull through. My wife never let me give up. We were both amazed at the support we received from everyone. Two years prior to my transplant, Shapiro & Duncan lightened my work load, worked around my doctor's appointments, and assured me everything would be ok. Their ability to be so flexible and supportive during this difficult time meant a lot.

Shapiro & Duncan employees helped me in so many ways. They raised thousands of dollars to help me with medical costs, made phone calls, and sent text messages. Pat Shanko and his family, Sheldon Shapiro, Sarah Mueller, Jamie Galdamez, James Mayo and so many other employees were a huge part of my support system. It feels great to be back to work with my co-workers. I felt lost being gone so long.

I have been with Shapiro and Duncan for 17 years as a Foreman. When I first started we only had 60 people, and everyone knew each other. I remember being impressed with this company from the beginning. The first day I started working for Shapiro & Duncan, I worked on the Loudon County High School project. As I worked inside the building, I looked outside to find two older men working with a chipping gun in the court yard. I was impressed with what they were doing at their age and turned to my cousin and said, "Shapiro has some old guys working with them." He told me that was Sheldon's dad, "Big Daddy." I knew I was working for a good company because I never saw an owner get out in the field and work that hard.

Throughout my career one life learned lesson I can share is that you need to choose a career that you love. The job becomes easy, and you become good at what you do because you enjoy it. Also, not to concentrate on the past, look to today because we are not promised tomorrow. One of the highest compliments I received while working here was from Foreman, James Mayo. He expressed that I was a mentor to him. I never really thought of myself that way, but it made me so happy to know that I have touched his life in such a positive way. I received a few rewards over the years, and I could not have earned them without the help of my co-workers.

Now that I am back at work, I have transitioned from a Foreman to a Quality Control Inspector and I am currently working on the Dulles Metro project. Thanks to Red Grigsby and Henry Thompson's good advice it has been a smooth transition. I look forward to regaining my strength and in the next five years I see myself on top of the world, loving life, waking up everyday thanking the lord for another day, being closer to my family and still employed with this great company.

