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## a smile, and people do too



Jacob Nedashkivskyj comes back — to play accordion for music."

Staff photo by Dave Schemetta

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Staff Writer

The way Jacob Nedashkivskyj works it, getting people to smile seems rather easy. He just sits down in a corner of the clinic at St. Francis Hospital and plays his accordion. And people smile.

Sometimes the smiles don't show up on the faces of the other patients — but they come out in toes tapping on linoleum or fingers strumming.

"I have 47 instruments, all kinds — clarinet, flute, balalaika, 13 accordions, mandolin. From Ukraine, Italy, all over. Every kind of instrument. But no violin."

The music has been playing at the clinic on and off for about a year now, ever since Jake entered the hospital for gallstone surgery. Now, when he comes back for checkups, the music returns.

"I been in the hospital one month. Doctor took out stone, like chicken egg."

JAKE WAS grateful and appreciative for the successful operation, and he wanted to show his doctors how thankful he was for what they'd done. So he gave them accordions, old ones like those he used to have in the Ukraine, where he was born 81 years ago. And whenever he returns to the clinic, he brings along an accordion and a few songs.

"It can cry. See?" he says, making mournful sounds on his music box. "It is happy, too," and the accordion smiles too.

"You like Polish polka? I play you polka."

And he plays the one about the farmer, who has seven horses, who goes to war and the wife sells one of the horses for whisky. (The words become somewhat difficult when translated from Polish to English through Ukrainian.)

Then he plays the one about the young boy who says to the girl, "Don't cry and I'll give you a horse. But the girl keeps crying, so the boy says 'Don't cry and I'll give you a gold necklace,'" and she stops crying.

"NEXT TIME, I bring another, bigger accordion, so I can play more songs," Jake says. "This one has 23, the other has 75."

From around the corner of the clinic's waiting room comes applause from other waiting patients.

"He's good. He made everybody happy," says Jim Cunningham, from his wheelchair in the front row. "They forgot some of their pain."

"It makes the time go a little faster for the people waiting," says Beth Tighe, the clinic head nurse. "One

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