

Falcons help Minnesota man soar above cancer

Video	Audio
	For more than three decades, Peter Smerud has been a part of the reintroduction of the peregrine falcon to Minnesota.
Peter	"What my role has been primarily is helping in the banding efforts along the north shore of Lake Superior, north of Duluth."
	Not that long ago, the peregrine population in the U.S. was decimated by the widespread use of pesticides. Now, thanks to efforts like these, a species that was endangered, on the edge of extinction, is again thriving in Minnesota.
Nats falcons	"Very healthy."
	But it's not the falcons that first brought Peter to Mayo Clinic. He was in some danger himself.
Peter Smerud Patient	"When you get that call, your heart just drops. You have cancer and your world is shattered for a moment."
Daniel Price, M.D. Otolaryngology Mayo Clinic	"He came in with what we thought was likely oral pharynx cancer. He had presented like many patients do with this disease: with a lump in his neck."
	Dr. Daniel Price is a head and neck surgeon in the department of otorhinolaryngology at Mayo Clinic and a member of Peter's multidisciplinary care team. A biopsy had confirmed Peter's throat cancer was the result of HPV, the human papillomavirus.
Dr. Price	"HPV-related tumors are very sensitive to both surgery and radiation and chemotherapy. And, so, we pioneered a treatment for this. When we do surgery, and then we treat them with a very short course — just two weeks of radiation and chemotherapy."

	This limits potential side effects and helps patients get back on their feet sooner. As he assists with the banding of the new chicks, Peter now feels an even deeper connection.
Peter	"It's really struck me how what I've been doing for most of my career with peregrines really feels a strong parallel to what I've experienced here at Mayo Clinic, in that the peregrine population is now so successfully reintroduced, and I am now cancer-free for the past 18 months."
	Four new lives, and one new lease on life.
	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Joel Streed.