

Advocacy at Shepherd Center: Championing the Rights of Those We Serve

If you have read the publicized mission of Shepherd Center, you may have paid more attention to the “re-build their lives” part than “advocating for their full inclusion in all aspects of community life.” The leadership of this facility has always made sure those last words are not just empty promises to the disabled community.

Early advocacy efforts started years ago with James Shepherd consulting on accessibility issues concerning major Atlanta construction projects such as the airport or the MARTA network. Our leadership also joined others to help influence legislators to pass the American Disabilities Act and to pressure MARTA to add lifts to their buses. Shepherd Center became the founding sponsor of the 1996 Atlanta Paralympic Games, and in the late 90s our focus helped establish the Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission.

The Center eventually added a full-time advocacy director (Mark Johnson) and a part-time assistant (Carol Jones), and Shepherd Center continued to reach out to the disabled community. These staff members constantly research pertinent issues, then educate interested parties and show them how to get involved and effect change. Mark explains that they are not doing all the work on their own to change things for the better, but they help connect, encourage and empower people in communities to become advocates themselves.

You may be frustrated or upset when you see something prohibiting an individual's inclusion in our communities, but do you have the passion to fight for changing the situation? If so, Mark and Carol have the knowledge and experience to guide you. Give them a call at 404-350-7490 and you can become an advocate, too.



Please consider sharing the gift of life next month, and make a big difference in the life of someone in need.

Shepherd Center Blood Drive
Thursday, March 1
12 p.m. - 5 p.m.
Marcus Building
7th floor—Callaway Auditorium

To schedule an appointment to donate, go to www.redcrossblood.org and enter "shepcnt" for the sponsor code or contact Gale Eckstein at gale_eckstein@shepherd.org or 404-367-1351.

from the AUXILIARY PRESIDENT

Dear Auxiliary Members,

It's hard to believe it's already February 2012! The Auxiliary activities are well underway, with lots of fun events planned for this spring.

First up is a repeat of the very successful \$5 Jewelry Sale, which also includes scarves, tote bags, and travel items. The sale will be held Thursday, February 9 and Friday, February 10 from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Volunteers are still needed, so please call me at 404-257-0495 if you want to help!

Our Annual Meeting and Luncheon is planned for Wednesday, April 18. With Cyndae Arrendale and Heather Flint at the helm, I promise it will be fun and memorable. Look for your invitation in the mail and respond quickly! Feel free to bring a friend. Better yet, put together a table of 10 friends!

We will once again present our Spring Purse Sale on Thursday, April 26, with a preview sale at the Luncheon. You'll find our fashions irresistible and the prices unbelievable. Hope to see you there!

Many thanks to our Sunshine Committee, chaired by Barbara McArdle and Diann Gillenson. Their birthday posters and holiday tray decorations bring cheer to the Shepherd patients and their families.

We're happy to welcome our newest Auxiliary members: Cathy Addison, Susan Asher, Rita McKewon, and Annette Stillwell. We look forward to getting to know you and appreciate your support of Shepherd Center.

Once again, thanks to all of you who worked as Committee Chairs, Day Captains, table sale volunteers, and off-campus sale coordinators for Pecans on Peachtree. You made this year's event the most successful ever. I'm thrilled to announce that our final tally was over \$88,000! The proceeds will do so much for our patients and their families. Enormous thanks!!

Hope to see you at Shepherd.

Maureen

Maureen Escott
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Left: In December Dr. Lewis Wheaton, a professor from Georgia Tech, donated toys, gift cards and other supplies for patients and their families.



Below: Shepherd Center physical therapist Cathy Kramer and her family and friends distributed holiday cookies to patients.



Save the Dates!

In-Hospital Volunteer
Appreciation Dinner
April 12, 2012

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Auxiliary Annual
Luncheon
April 18, 2012

Volunteer Spotlight: Holly Kelly

Born and raised in Atlanta as the fifth of eight children of a physician, Holly Kelly was always aware her dad was in a helping profession and her mother was an active volunteer. Looking back, she realizes she led a very protected life in her early years. She knew her father was a doctor, but never saw the individuals who needed treatment, and she was unaware of disabling conditions.

Many years later when she became a wife and mother, Holly regularly drove past Shepherd Center to exercise at Piedmont Hospital's Fitness Club just across the street. Curious about the ages of patients served, she discovered there was an Adolescent Unit here. She had broad experience as a volunteer with young people during the years she raised her two sons, and thought her math degree might be useful in tutoring the youth in that specialized unit.

There was definitely a need, and Shepherd Center put her to work volunteering with patients who are high school students, helping them to stay on top of their studies. She expanded her service to assist in the Adaptive Yoga class for several months, and later moved into a new position assisting Shepherd's PR/Marketing department.

Today Holly volunteers once a week taking photos of patients which are sent back to their referring physicians to share their progress. She loves the variety of patients and family members she meets all over the hospital, and is very moved by their intimate stories of life-changing injury and recovery. Perhaps some of these individuals were initially hesitant about allowing photos to be taken before their time at Shepherd, but Holly finds that they now have a new focus and are delighted with the chance to smile and show their continuing hard-earned progress to the world. She feels very blessed to play a role in documenting their successes for others to see.



Above: Volunteer Holly Kelly shares a smile with a Shepherd Center patient.



Volunteer In-Service Forms Due

March 16



If you are an "in-hospital" volunteer, please check your mail box or email inbox for your annual volunteer in-service forms. It is mandatory that you carefully read, complete, and return the forms to Volunteer Services

by **Friday, March 16**. Your responses help us to better serve our volunteer force and tell us where we can improve, so your feedback is important! If you received this newsletter via email, you will receive an email message with the necessary attachments. Those who are mailed a hard copy of the newsletter will receive the forms via US mail. If you have any questions or concerns regarding these requirements, please contact Alex Seblatnigg, Volunteer Services Manager, at 404-350-7316 or alex_seblatnigg@shepherd.org.

Bring Us Your Books!

You've probably noticed the book cart that is located next to Security on the first floor of the Marcus Building. This cart is operated by the Shepherd Center Auxiliary, and books are sold for a minimal donation to patients, family members, and staff. All funds raised from the sale of the books benefit the Auxiliary's Patient Aid Fund which assists patients and families in financial need by purchasing meals, phone cards, and other necessities for them while at the hospital. The ever-changing selection of books offers a welcome distraction for patients and family members. If you're trying to make room for your newest book purchases, donate your used books to Shepherd Center! We welcome donations of **current gently used books** to stock the cart. Donations may be dropped off at the front desk or in Volunteer Services.



spotlight



Above (l-r): Stephanie Miller, Courtney Askew and Stacy Connell with Trophikos serve lunch to patient Avery Downing and family members Garrett Clifton, Sonja Clifton, Teresa Viguerras and Julianna Viguerras. The Saturday lunch provided a welcome break for patients and their families.



Right: Bud Hene has been a faithful Shepherd Center volunteer since 2009. This year his family surprised him by donating a rocking chair to the Family Lounge in his honor. A plaque on the chair (above) recognizes Bud's commitment to Shepherd Center and the rocker has quickly become a popular resting spot for family members.



Shepherd Center

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VOLUNTEER *news*

Scott Sikes, Executive Director, Shepherd Center Foundation
Midge Tracy, Director, Volunteer Services
Alex Seblatnigg, Volunteer Manager & Newsletter Co-editor
Gale Eckstein, Family Support Coordinator & Newsletter Co-editor

Membership in the Shepherd Center Auxiliary, Peach Corps, SCS, and Junior Committee is open to all volunteers. Members provide ongoing fundraising and volunteer support to Shepherd Center. For more information on becoming a member of one of these groups, contact Midge Tracy at (404) 350-7315 or visit www.shepherd.org.

Shepherd Center's mission is to help people with a temporary or permanent disability caused by injury or disease rebuild their lives with hope, independence, and dignity, advocating for their full inclusion in all aspects of community life while promoting safety and injury prevention.