AJC Peachtree Road Race Wheelchair Division Celebrates Another Great Year

by Rebecca Washburn

Shepherd Center hosted the first wheelchair division of the AJC Peachtree Road Race in 1981. Since then, the wheelchair division has grown in popularity and this year 61 racers registered, ranging in age from 10 to 64 and representing eight countries. The 6.2 mile course is considered one of the largest and fastest wheelchair 10K races in the country and is a favorite for many racers who return year after year.

Competition was fierce at this year’s race, with both seasoned veterans and first-time racers taking part. With his first win, Daniel Romanchuk was the top men’s finisher, crossing the finish line in 20:02 minutes. Top women’s finisher Tatayana McFadden completed the course in 23:15 minutes for her seventh win.

Much of the success of the wheelchair race is due to the incredible support shown by Shepherd Center staff and volunteers. Becky Washburn, Wellness Therapy Manager, serves as the director of the wheelchair division and oversees the logistics of the event, including athlete registration, travel, hotel, pre- and post-race festivities, and athlete transportation. Shepherd’s recreation therapy staff works tirelessly in the months leading up to the race to review racer registration, orchestrate the start and finish of the race and recruit volunteers to assist during race weekend. By the time the sun rose on July 4, approximately 40 volunteers and staff members had already assumed their positions as wheelchair taggers, start and finish line monitors, pit crew members and timers. Thanks to their efforts, the race was a success, and the day was memorable for all who participated.
Dear Auxiliary and Peach Corps Members,

What a fun-filled and eventful summer it is! As we are heading into August, we can look back onto Project Rollway and Family Bingo as two fabulous events heartily enjoyed by the Shepherd Center patients and their families! As Auxiliary or Peach Corps members, we are always inspired by the strength, hope and determination exhibited by the patients and staff at Shepherd Center every day, and are honored to work alongside them.

I want to thank each of you who so generously gave of yourself to insure the success of these special outings. Your kindness and generosity truly makes a difference in the lives of the patients and their families. Whether you came to cheer on the stellar Project Rollway models, offered your skills as the “celebrity” Bingo caller, helped a patient mark his Bingo card, brought snacks, drinks, raffle items or prizes, your contribution brought joy into the heart of a Shepherd patient. In addition to these fabulous events, the wonderful Sunshine Committee headed by Karen Martin and Jeannie Worlock crafted and delivered special Fourth of July treats to the patients.

August also offers many opportunities for you to be engaged in Auxiliary and Peach Corps activities! The semiannual T-Shirt Sale is always a big hit. Paula Hope beautifully organizes this fundraising event for us. She would welcome your help sorting, folding, and displaying t-shirts on Monday, August 21 at 2:00 p.m., and selling them on Tuesday, August 22 from 7:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Our Auxiliary membership kickoff for “The Year of the Member” -- a Summer Cocktail Soirée -- hosted by Linda Morris of the Hospitality Committee, is almost here! Let’s gather at my home on Saturday, August 26 from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. to find out the roster of exciting events and volunteer opportunities with the Auxiliary and Peach Corps happening during the upcoming year. You’re welcome to bring a spouse or significant other, and please bring a friend who would like to join us and become engaged as a volunteer with the Auxiliary or Peach Corps. We look forward to seeing you there!

Enjoy the rest of our hot, wet Atlanta summer! And please feel free to call with any comments, questions or ideas.

With fondness and appreciation,

Elaine
Elaine Carlos
Elaine.Carlos@natdisto.com

Membership Drive & Cocktail Party
Saturday, August 26
7:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
Home of Elaine and John Carlos
Bring your spouse, a date or a friend and join us for a festive evening!

Far left: There was quite a crowd at the recent Bingo party sponsored by the Auxiliary.

Near left: Some of our younger guests were very serious about Bingo.
Volunteer Spotlight: Sandy Kring

Sandy Kring has been an excellent locomotor volunteer for almost three years, assisting on the third floor gym of the Marcus Woodruff Building for day program clients that are working on ambulation therapy. She was born the middle child of three and grew up in Boston, Massachusetts. She participated in playing multiple sports through high school and earned her college degree in psychology at the University of New Hampshire. After graduating, she went to work in the mortgage department of the Bank of New England, and later earned her Master of Business Administration from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She worked for Wachovia for four years, after which she was transferred to Atlanta and she served as a corporate relationship manager for many years. Later, she worked for the Community Foundation of Atlanta.

After moving to Atlanta from North Carolina, she met her husband and they had two children. In her early years in our fair city, Sandy began thinking about where she might serve that would be fun, interesting and useful. Her first volunteer job was working a track meet that was part of the Special Olympics. Over the years, she also volunteered with many causes connected to her children’s schools and activities, and she also began to hear stories about friends of friends who had been patients at Shepherd and raved over the care and rehabilitation they had received. After her youngest child became independent, Sandy wanted to find something truly worthwhile to fill her spare time and she chose to come to Shepherd Center.

Even after serving several years in the same volunteer job, Sandy gets a lot out of her time here. “Shepherd Center is an amazing organization that does great things,” Sandy shares. “It does so much good and puts everything into perspective for me.” She always feels welcomed by the staff that work alongside her and she enjoys getting to know them. The clients’ positivity in such difficult circumstances is inspiring to her, and it’s rewarding to see clients’ progress over time through their hard work in rehabilitation. She feels she is truly adding value by being helpful through her role here, which is very important to her.

We are grateful for Sandy’s years of dependable service by the side of clients who are trying to regain function, and we hope she continues to give her time to our worthy cause!

Remembering Sandy Unruh

Longtime volunteer and Auxilian Sandy Unruh passed away on July 2 after an extended illness. Sandy volunteered for more than 15 years in the hospital with Family Support Services, helping families of newly admitted patients get acclimated to life at Shepherd Center. As one of the first non-clinical points of contact, she quickly put families at ease with her kind smile, showing them around Shepherd and assuring them that they’d be in good hands here. For a family still adjusting to a “new normal,” her gentle, warm nature helped make this transition a little easier. She also was a constant with the Sunshine Committee, creating whatever tags or labels were needed for that month’s project. Sandy will certainly be missed by all of us.

Welcome New Volunteer Coordinator Alaina Case

We are excited to welcome Alaina Case to the Volunteer Services team! As our new volunteer coordinator, she will serve as the primary point of contact for our weekly volunteer force. We asked Alaina to tell us a little bit more about herself.

“I was born in Hawaii, raised in Jamaica and have been living in Atlanta for most of my life. A few of my hobbies include traveling, reading, skating, shopping and just hanging out with my family. I graduated from Georgia State University with my B.A. in journalism concentration in public relations, minor in Speech. I have worked at Shepherd Center since November 2014 as the Head Lifeguard and then afforded the opportunity to further my experience in the public relations and marketing department as a public relations representative. In this role, I created articles for Shepherd.org and for our magazine, Spinal Column, provided injury prevention tours, volunteered for Peer Support and other departments (Spring Fling, Autumn Feast and Project Rollway 2017) and have formed relationships with media personnel. I look forward to what the future has to offer with this opportunity. Overall, I would describe myself as being a passionate, motivated and determined individual who will succeed in many facets.”
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 Alex Seblatnigg 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.