

VOLUNTEER news



February
2019

A Newsletter for the Shepherd Auxiliary & Volunteers

How the Assistive Technology Center at Shepherd Center Helps Patients Regain Independence: An Interview with Adina Bradshaw, MS, CCC-SLP, ATP

By Robin Yamakawa

What are the Assistive Technology Center's goals?

Our goals are very patient-focused and individualized. Overall, we want to help patients get back to doing their daily activities. We want to increase independence, increase safety and lessen caregiver challenges. For a lot of our patients with spinal cord injuries, the goals are to get them back to work, leisure activities, return to school or return to work. We help with computer, TV, cell phone and tablet access. We also help with environmental controls. Some people just want to be able to read or listen to music. Some people just want to be able to check Facebook or drink water on their own. For our patients with acquired brain injuries, sometimes it's a communication system that can be low tech, like a letter board, which is a piece of paper with letters or pictures on it, or it could be a complex computer system that has a synthesized voice. We also set people up with call systems so they can call for help inside and outside of the house. The Assistive Technology Center also includes the wheelchair seating clinic and adapted driving program. We often all work together to find solutions to meet the patient's needs.

Can you share some of the best parts of your work?

The best part of my work is helping individuals achieve their goals. Just seeing their happiness makes my job incredible. This morning, I had a patient who came in, and he really just wanted to be able to read the news and send emails back to his friends. We tried several different styluses and cell phone mounts. By the end of the session, he wasn't paying attention to me anymore because he's just scrolling through a cell phone and reading his emails. And his wife said, "You can't tell, but this is the happiest he's been since his injury because he's independently doing it and he's not having to ask somebody to read those emails. It gives him a sense of control and independence, and he's doing something that he was doing in the mornings while he had his coffee."

When do you see patients?

Every inpatient with a cervical-level spinal cord injury receives assistive technology services. Physicians and therapists will also refer patients to us if they feel the patient would benefit from assistive technology. We want all patients and family members to be educated consumers. We want them to know what's out there, how it can help them meet their goals, the cost of it and where to purchase it. We want to help them achieve their goals in the most cost-efficient way possible. Unfortunately, most of the equipment in our lab is not funded by insurance. So, we try to find ways to help them raise money for the equipment or apply for grants.

Is there a way people can help get technology to patients?

We have some phenomenal donors who have done that in the past. People can contact the Shepherd Center Foundation, and they can say that they want this gift to go towards patient assistive technology equipment. It's been amazing when they do that, because then the patient doesn't have to worry about it! We can just send them home with what they need.



Above: Adina Bradshaw, MS, CCC-SLP, ATP, shows various assistive devices to Debra Smith.



Above: Adina Bradshaw, MS, CCC-SLP, ATP, works with patients in Shepherd Center's Assistive Technology Center.

To make a gift to assistive technology, please contact Cara Roxland at 404-350-7308 or cara.roxland@shepherd.org or give online at shepherd.org/giving. Photos by Louie Favorite

from the AUXILIARY PRESIDENT

Dear Auxiliary and Peach Corps Members,

Volunteering at Auxiliary and Peach Corps activities and events is a special gift to the Shepherd community and to yourself. A variety of important and rewarding opportunities are available in the months ahead.

Photographs

Please send photographs taken at Auxiliary and Peach Corps activities and events to our President-elect, Anne Worrell (annepworrell@gmail.com). Anne is planning a special slide presentation for the Annual Meeting and Luncheon.

Upcoming Activities and Events

- *Sunshine Valentine's Project* - Saturday, February 9 at 10 a.m., in the Atrium. The Sunshine Committee invites you to a fun-filled morning as you assemble and deliver Valentine favors to each patient. Co-Chairs Karen Martin (kjmartin80@bellsouth.com) and Jeannie Worlock (wsingingj@aol.com) are happy to answer any questions you may have.

- *Valentine's Bake Sale* - bakers and volunteers needed - Thursday, February 14 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the hallway of the Marcus-Woodruff Building, next to the Apothecary. The Valentine's Bake Sale offers a delicious array of tasty treats to choose from. Please support this important fundraiser by baking, volunteering and shopping. All the proceeds will benefit our patients and families. Baked goods can be dropped off at the Foundation, Wednesday, February 13, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., and Thursday, February 14, 9 a.m. - 10 a.m. Contact Lois Puckett (queenevry@gmail.com) with questions.

- *Trivia Night* - Saturday, February 23 at 7 p.m. in the Callaway Auditorium. The Auxiliary is excited to offer Trivia Night, a new social event for our members. Please join us for an "Adults Only" evening of fun as we get together with friends and exercise our brains while enjoying a casual dinner with beer, wine and soft drinks. Prizes will be awarded! The cost is \$20 per person or \$150 for a table of 10. Contact Alex Seblatnigg (alex.seblatnigg@shepherd.org) for reservations ASAP, as seating is limited.

- *Annual Meeting and Spring Luncheon* - Save the Date - Thursday, April 25 at 11:30 a.m., Callaway Auditorium. Details and paper invitation will follow. Contact Hospitality Co-Chairs Linda Morris (lindasmorris@comcast.net)

or Jade Slover (jadesykesatl@gmail.com) with questions and/or the names and addresses of friends you would like to receive an invitation.

Touching Lives, Making a Difference

- *Bingo* - The Sunshine Committee hosted a second family and patient Bingo party on Saturday, January 12. What a great way to usher in the new year! Many thanks to our generous and thoughtful volunteers who attended this event, and who donated the fabulous selection of snacks and prizes. We applaud our Co-Chairs, Karen Martin and Jeannie Worlock for planning another joy filled afternoon for patients and families.

- *The Scrubs and Shoe Sale* was a big success! Shepherd employees shopped for the perfect scrubs, shoes and accessories to meet their needs. Twenty percent of the proceeds were donated to our Patient Aid Fund. We are grateful to the staff who supported this event and to our Chair, Carol Davenport and her volunteers for their kind assistance.

On behalf of the Shepherd community, your service is sincerely appreciated. Your gifts of time, talents and treasure ensure the success of activities and events. Please join us and invite family and friends to share in our meaningful work.

With love and gratitude,

Ruth

Ruth Langsfeld
RLangsfeld@gmail.com



Upcoming Auxiliary Events

February 9: Sunshine Valentine's Project

February 14: Valentine's Bake Sale

February 23: Trivia Night

March 16: Sunshine St. Patrick's Day Project

March 19: Mailing Committee

April 25: Annual Spring Luncheon

Volunteer Spotlight: Nick Protentis

Nick Protentis is the type of high-character individual no one is likely to forget. As the firstborn of a family with five children, he was raised near Cape Cod in a culture of community service, which his grandparents initiated, and his parents reinforced.

Nick draws his inspiration from his 87-year-old Oma (German for grandmother) and his 92-year-old Papu (Greek for grandfather). His Oma lived in Germany during Kristallnacht and witnessed horrible atrocities perpetrated by the Nazis. Nick's family was able to narrowly escape the Holocaust by using their connections in the German government, escaping to America through the help of family sponsors living in Mississippi. Nick's Papu enlisted in the Navy during World War II at a young age. His Papu served on a Navy Cruiser ship in the Pacific that was hit in a deadly attack by a Kamikaze plane. His Papu fortunately survived his injuries from that attack. After the war, his Papu and Oma met and then married on their lunch break in Brooklyn, New York, later having four boys.

Nick's parents reinforced in him the value of service, as they lived out their faith through church missions, including regularly providing meals at a homeless shelter. After Nick graduated from Stonehill College with a degree in English and criminal justice, he decided to volunteer with AmeriCorps at its campus in Charleston, South Carolina. During that year, Nick worked on several service projects throughout the Southeast that included disaster relief, working as a teacher's assistant in underserved schools and construction builds with Habitat for Humanity. During this time, Nick fell in love with the south and decided to go to law school. The year before entering law school, Nick worked as a construction leader for the Albany, Georgia, chapter of Habitat for Humanity, where he helped build six homes for families in need. The following year, Nick began law school at Georgia State University. Since law school, Nick has married his wife Sara, and he now currently works for a small law firm that specializes in civil litigation.

A few years ago, the pastor at Nick's church did a sermon series on living out your faith through community service. Because Nick had been to our Derby Day fundraiser and lived down the street from Shepherd Center, he decided to join the ranks of our volunteers. For a couple years now, Nick has been feeding breakfast to patients with quadriplegia during the week and getting to know some remarkable people through this experience.

One patient that sticks out in Nick's mind is a serviceman who served abroad. When this serviceman was back home, he became paralyzed after diving from a boat into shallow water to help a girl who was drowning during a storm. Despite this tragedy, the serviceman was totally committed to using his intense military training to recover as much as possible.

In addition to feeding patients, Nick comes to Shepherd Center on the weekends to visit families of new patients, so he can welcome and educate them about what our Family Support Services offers to family members during their stay. Nick shares, "Lots of times you can sense they are incredibly overwhelmed with their loved one's circumstances, yet they are very grateful they are here and surprised at all Shepherd has to offer them."

We are grateful for all Nick does and for his dedication to our Advisory Board, which he joined last year. He is a man of outstanding character whose commitment to Shepherd Center shines. We are confident that he has a remarkable impact on our patients and families.



Above: Nick's warm personality helps our patients start their day on a bright note as he feeds them breakfast.

Red Cross Blood Drive at Shepherd Center



Callaway Auditorium
Marcus Building 7th Floor
Wednesday, March 13 from 12 - 5p.m.
To register, contact Gale Eckstein at
Gale.Eckstein@shepherd.org or 404-367-1351





Volunteer In-Service

It's almost time for volunteer in-service! The in-service will be held in the Plaza Level of the Woodruff Family Residence Center. Please sign up through your volunteer portal to attend one of the sessions.

Wednesday, Feb. 20 from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.

***Monday, Feb. 25 from 1 to 2 p.m.**

Friday, Mar. 8 from 8 to 9 a.m.

***Monday, Mar. 25 from 1 to 2 p.m.**

Nurses will be available on Feb. 25 & Mar. 25 to provide TB tests.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Alaina Case, Volunteer Services Coordinator, at 404-350-7316 or Alaina.Case@shepherd.org.



Shepherd Center

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Sarah Batts, Executive Director, Shepherd Center Foundation
Alex Seblatnigg, Director, Volunteer Services
Alaina Case, Volunteer Services Coordinator
Gale Eckstein, Family Support Services Coordinator
Newsletter Co-editors: Alaina Case and Gale Eckstein

Membership in the Shepherd Center Auxiliary, Peach Corps, 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.