

# VOLUNTEER



January  
2021

A Newsletter for the Shepherd Auxiliary & Volunteers

## Volunteer Spotlight - Scott McEvoy

We should not be surprised that Scott McEvoy has volunteered enthusiastically for years at Shepherd Center. He was raised by his dad, a vice president at General Motors and a “type A” mother who was active in church and had very high expectations of him and his two sisters. In every endeavor, Scott learned to strive to be the best. Starting in his earliest school years, he loved academics and always relished his reward of good grades. On into high school he enjoyed writing, singing, participating in Drama Club, and being captain of the wrestling team.

Scott went on to acquire a degree in business administration at the College of William & Mary, and then he earned his MBA at Stetson University. He became a pilot in the Air Force and thrived there, flying various aircraft for years, including the F-16. Through both active and reserve duty he served for 32 years and retired as Colonel and Vice Commander of the Southeast Air Defense Sector at Tyndall AFB in Panama City, Florida. While in the reserves, he also enjoyed 30 years as a commercial pilot, flying for many airlines including United, PanAm, Braniff and National.

Scott’s long flying career came to an abrupt end in 2008 after he experienced a home invasion at his beach house in Florida. After being kidnapped at gunpoint and beaten, which led to a severe brain injury, he was treated in a trauma center, then transferred to a rehabilitation center in the same state. Knowing the excellence of Shepherd Center’s care, his wife worked tirelessly to have him admitted to our Shepherd Pathways outpatient program in Decatur. During those months of rehabilitation at Pathways, he made good progress and developed a strong friendship with another client and future Shepherd volunteer, Bruce Allen. Bruce convinced Scott to give back to Shepherd through the Brain Injury Peer Visitor Association run by Ann Boriskie. The two men paired up as volunteers for years, going once a week to Pathways to meet with current brain injury clients and grab lunch together. Then, the pandemic hit. Along with all our volunteers, Scott has paused supporting clients. We know the staff and clients have missed Scott’s humor and zest for life. He can’t wait for the pandemic to be over so he can get back to sharing his story at Pathways and encouraging people going through hard times.

“I always tell each Shepherd client that I’ve been in their shoes and to never give up because there is always hope. Things will get better. I’m living proof of that!” Scott shares. “Giving back to others is an important part of life’s fulfillment for me.”

We are very grateful that when Scott could not return to his flying career after his brain injury, he chose to emulate his hero Coach Jim Valvano, giving hope to others so they would never give up! That message blends perfectly with what Shepherd Center is all about. We appreciate Scott helping for years to lift up our clients as they launch into the next chapter of a fulfilling life.



**Above:** Scott’s enthusiasm for supporting other brain injury survivors is infectious and has a lasting impact on those he meets.



## Bring Us Your Books!

We welcome donations of recent or current fiction or nonfiction, both paperback and hardcover, for our book cart. Proceeds benefit the Auxiliary’s Patient Aid Fund. Please bring your donations to the screener’s desk at the front circle or by the parking deck.

# *from the* **AUXILIARY PRESIDENT**



Dear Auxiliary members,

It's hard to believe that it's already January. The past 10 months have been different than we ever could have imagined, but the Auxiliary's support of Shepherd Center has never wavered. Patients received the cheery blue fleece blankets we always distribute at the holidays, and they will continue to bring comfort and warmth to everyone. The Auxiliary's Patient Aid Fund has continued to offer support to those families who are struggling financially while they are here by providing meal tickets to be used in the cafeteria. This ensures they are well-fed and can focus on their loved ones without additional worries.

While we are away from Shepherd, we've had several opportunities to stay connected. The upcoming Executive Director Circles with Sarah Batts will give us insight into Shepherd's upcoming campaign and how each of us can get involved. Watch your email for more information and plan to join us.

If you're like me, your hope for this new year is a return to "normal," whatever that looks like. While I can't see the future, I'm keeping my fingers crossed that later this spring, we may be able to start resuming some of our regular activities. Until that happens, please continue to stay safe.

With a grateful heart,

*Kyle*

Kyle Hinson

[kylehinson@atlantafinehomes.com](mailto:kylehinson@atlantafinehomes.com)

## **Learn More about Shepherd's Upcoming Campaign**

**Join Sarah Batts, Executive Director, Shepherd Center Foundation, for a deep dive into our upcoming campaign. Learn more about what's coming and how you can get involved.**

**Check your email for more information or contact Alex Seblatnigg at [alex.seblatnigg@shepherd.org](mailto:alex.seblatnigg@shepherd.org).**



## Health and Wellness Programs Go Virtual

When the pandemic hit in March, we had to make many changes at Shepherd Center. We needed to figure out ways we could reach patients and clients safely and virtually. One solution was creating online fitness classes that could be accessed by clients who would typically come to Shepherd Center for those resources. We spoke to Jenny DiLaura, MA, CCLS, CTRS, to learn more.

### Tell us about the virtual fitness classes. How did this all start, and who is the target audience?

We started offering online programs for health and wellness when we knew that things with COVID were not improving. We wanted to make sure our clients were still getting what they needed from a health and wellness standpoint. Our program is open to anyone with a neurological injury/illness. We offer several classes/courses all on Zoom that focus on all aspects of wellness! We are about to finish our 2020 online year with an art and relaxation class. Classes and courses will resume in 2021 with a fitness course, yoga, and birding in conjunction with the Georgia Audubon Society! Art-focused wellness will begin in February.

### How many sessions have been held since you started? How many people have participated?

Since we have started online programming, we have offered two courses of strength and yoga sessions that were six to eight weeks in length, birding and two art classes. From all of this, we have served 56 clients from all over the United States and age ranges from 15 to 79! We have served individuals with SCI (para and quads), MS, and brain injuries.

### How did you get involved?

I've been at Shepherd Center for the past eight years. I've worked in the Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation Program as a primary recreation therapist for Dr. Elmers and also on the adolescent team. I went PRN after I had my second child. I came back in April 2020 as a lead therapist for health and wellness in the Recreation Therapy Program. I love helping people along their wellness journey, so this was a perfect fit!

### What has been the best part of leading this program?

It's so great seeing everyone and knowing they are still doing well! It's great to be able to provide a way for participants to stay in contact with their peers.

### What classes have been most popular?

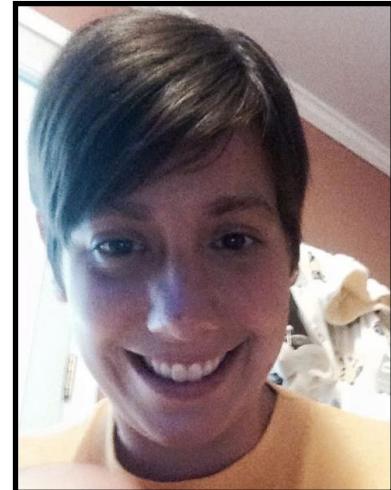
Well, that's a hard question! They have been filled to the max, but I would say the art classes we have offered have been a great hit. We keep getting requests for more!

### Are all the classes funded through the Recreation Therapy Program's budget?

As of the moment, I'm using an emergency grant from the Nielsen Foundation to cover the cost of ALL online classes! When the grant runs out, Kelly (Edens, manager of the Recreation Therapy Program at Shepherd Center) and I are working on finding funding.

### If someone reading our newsletter wanted to access these classes, how would they find the classes online?

To join classes, they would need to contact me directly at [jenny.dilaura@shepherd.org](mailto:jenny.dilaura@shepherd.org).



Above: Jenny DiLaura's passion for helping others along their own wellness journey made her a perfect fit for this new program.



# spotlight



Many thanks to our friends at Peachtree Garden Club (above) and Iris Garden Club (right) who decorated the front of the hospital and the Secret Garden for the holidays. Their hard work resulted in many smiles and a festive air around the hospital.



## Shepherd Center

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# VOLUNTEER *news*

Sarah Batts, Executive Director, Shepherd Center Foundation  
Alex Seblatnigg, Director, Volunteer Services & Internal Engagement  
Gale Eckstein, Family Support Services Coordinator  
Newsletter Co-editors: Alex Seblatnigg 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](http://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.