

MEDICAL TREATMENT • RESEARCH • REHABILITATION

# Shepherd

## Center Spinal Column®

**Two former patients share their stories of resilience and recovery in hopes that others learn to prevent similar injuries.**

## RECOVERIES TO CHEER, LESSONS TO SHARE

ALSO INSIDE

**SURGERY RESTORES SOME FUNCTION POST-SPINAL CORD INJURY + PATIENT RETURNS TO THE WATER + DONORS BOOST INJURY PREVENTION PROGRAM**

news.shepherd.org | Summer 2021

SUMMER 2021

# Shepherd

Center Spinal Column\*

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## ABOUT THE COVER:

Karla Dougan sustained a traumatic brain injury in a car crash. Today, she is majoring in exercise and sports science at the University of Georgia. Karla hopes that sharing her story will help others prevent similar injuries.

Photo by Joann Vitelli

## LETTER FROM SARAH MORRISON



Dear Readers,

At Shepherd Center, our 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. The last part of our mission is our focus in this issue of *Spinal Column*: promoting safety and injury prevention.

After working at Shepherd Center for more than 36 years, I've seen my share of patients with traumatic injuries. Most of us don't typically think about things like brain or spinal cord injuries until those things are our reality. Obviously, these are life-altering events that we can't always control. What we can do, though, is implement some relatively simple practices in our day-to-day lives that have been proven to make a difference in preventing them.

On page 6, you will read the stories of two former patients, Karla Dougan and Jack Weeks, who sustained injuries from distracted driving and diving, respectively. Both showed incredible determination during their rehabilitation and are using their voices to raise awareness about driving and diving safety.

We also feature Shepherd Center employee Carolain Paredes on page 5, who, in addition to serving as a nurse educator, is volunteering her time and talents to educate the community about injury prevention. Then, on page 16, you'll meet former patient Reagan Martin, a water lover who, after sustaining a spinal cord injury and depending on a ventilator to breathe, was able to wean off the ventilator and even return to the water a few months after arriving at Shepherd Center. She is another incredible example of Shepherd Center being the bridge between "I can't" and "I can."

While raising awareness about injury prevention has always been part of Shepherd Center's mission, the Injury Prevention Program didn't formally launch until 2012. On page 20, you will learn how generous donors who are familiar with the effects of catastrophic injuries funded the creation of this program.

Injury prevention doesn't need to be a scary topic. If we all do things like wear a helmet, avoid distracted driving and dive feet first, we will be doing our part to lessen the number of traumatic injuries we see each year. So have fun and stay safe out there this summer and always.

Sincerely,

*Sarah Morrison*

Sarah Morrison, PT, MBA, MHA  
President and CEO of Shepherd Center



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Former patient Reagan Martin enjoys time in the Anna and Hays Mershon Secret Garden with facility dog Lanza.  
*Photo by Joann Vitelli*



See [news.shepherd.org](https://news.shepherd.org)  
for additional online content.

#### Gifts of Generosity

If you would like to make a gift to support the work you have read about, please contact Sarah L. Batts at the Shepherd Center Foundation at 404-350-7305 or visit [shepherd.org](https://shepherd.org).



## Shepherd Center Launches Scoot Safe Initiative

On May 17, Shepherd Center launched Scoot Safe, an initiative to develop a safety education program around electric scooters, which are now a ubiquitous part of city life. The project is led by Emma Harrington, Shepherd Center's director of injury prevention and education, who received a grant from the Georgia Governor's Office of Highway Safety to test this program in the Atlanta area.

"Micromobility, which includes small, lightweight vehicles like e-scooters, has so much potential to create a more equitable and environmentally friendly commuting option," Harrington says. "But, as we go forward, we have to ensure basic safety measures are in place like normalizing proper helmet use. That is what we hope to achieve with the Scoot Safe campaign – public awareness of the safety measures they can start implementing today."

The campaign includes a series of engaging public service announcements

with safety tips for scooters, targeted digital advertising and the ScootSafeGA.com website that houses more information about the project along with resources, graphics and content any person or organization can download and share.

The Scoot Safe Virtual Summit will take place on July 14 and 15, and attendees will log in to an interface that allows them to place their avatar at various "tables" throughout the virtual event and interact with speakers. Speakers include Barry Miller, Ph.D., with the Virginia Tech Helmet Lab; Superpedestrian, a transportation robotics company founded out of MIT; and Jonathan Rupp, Ph.D., director of the Injury Prevention Research Center at Emory University. Visit ScootSafeGA.com or scan the QR code to learn more and register to attend.\*



## Shepherd Center Wins Statewide Patient Safety and Quality Award for Telehealth

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Shepherd Center launched a project that successfully implemented telehealth technology to serve the hospital's patients via virtual visits. That project garnered the prestigious Patient Safety and Quality Award for 2021 from the Georgia Hospital Association Partnership for Health and Accountability (PHA).

The project, titled "Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic Through the Use of Telehealth for a High-Risk Population of Patients with Complex Neurological Disorders," won first place in the Specialty Hospitals category. These annual awards recognize Georgia healthcare organizations for achievement in reducing the risk of medical errors and improving patient safety and medical outcomes.\*

## Shepherd Center's SHARE Military Initiative is Part of National Network Launched by the Gary Sinise Foundation

Shepherd Center's SHARE Military Initiative is part of a national network that will serve thousands of veterans, first responders, and their families with traumatic brain injuries and post-traumatic stress through the Gary Sinise Foundation Avalon Network. The network, of which Shepherd Center is a founding member, was launched by actor and humanitarian Gary Sinise and his



The SHARE Military Initiative provides hope, assistance, support and education to service members and their families during their recovery treatment and beyond.

Foundation to provide transformative care to veterans and first responders experiencing post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injuries and substance abuse.

"Since 2008, Shepherd Center's SHARE Military Initiative has empowered post-9/11 veterans and service members with brain injury to live with hope and purpose by providing high-quality, comprehensive and personalized rehabilitation care," says Russell Gore, M.D., medical director of Shepherd Center's SHARE Military Initiative. "We are proud to collaborate with our network partners to advance individualized care for veterans suffering from traumatic brain injuries. This partnership is an opportunity to extend our national reach and ensure we can meet the needs of service members across the country." \*



## David DeRuyter, M.D., Retires After 39-year Career at Shepherd Center



On April 29, Shepherd Center celebrated the retirement of David DeRuyter, M.D. As the medical director of respiratory and critical care services at Shepherd Center, he led the hospital's 10-bed ICU and helped thousands of patients get started on their path from "I can't" to "I can."

Dr. DeRuyter championed Shepherd Center's vent-weaning program, advocating for patients who can't breathe on their own and celebrating with patients and families as they reached milestones in their rehabilitation. \*

Dr. DeRuyter retired after a 39-year career at Shepherd Center.  
Photo by Louie Favorite

## Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation Partners with Shepherd Center for Video Series

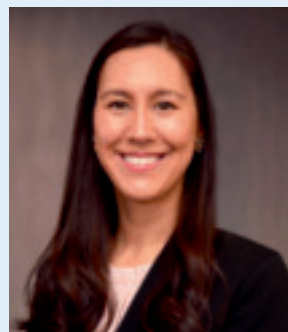
The Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation, dedicated to curing spinal cord injury by advancing innovative research and improving the quality of life for individuals and families impacted by paralysis, partnered with Shepherd Center to introduce a video series titled *Cultivating Resilience After Spinal Cord Injury Trauma*.

"This series was developed by our organizations to serve individuals in the community who lack resources for counseling and need guidance regarding emotional healing. Regardless of the rehabilitation and counseling the person may or may not have received after a spinal cord injury, returning home can be an isolating and challenging experience," says Diane M. Johnston, MSPT, director of professional education at Shepherd Center.

The complete video series and descriptions can be found on [MyShepherdConnection.org](https://MyShepherdConnection.org). \*



## Shepherd Center Employee Champions Sustainability



Elise Kirkby chairs Shepherd Center's Sustainability Committee.

Elise Kirkby, MSOT, OTR/L, CLT-LANA, acquired brain injury occupational therapist, has been recognized for championing sustainability at Shepherd Center through her work launching and chairing the hospital's Sustainability Committee. On February 18, she was honored at the *Atlanta Business Chronicle's* 2021 Leaders in Corporate Citizenship virtual event, which recognizes individuals who have found the intersection of social good and corporate success. In May, Kirkby also received the Stephanie Davis Waste Reduction and Pollution Prevention Award and Scholarship, which honors healthcare workers who are passionate about these important topics. Shepherd's Sustainability Committee focuses on reducing waste, conserving energy, and creating and implementing sustainability initiatives throughout the hospital. \*

## SPOTLIGHT

# Renewing Hope

## Tendon and nerve transfer surgeries restore some use of hands and arms post-spinal cord injury.

BY AMANDA CROWE

For many people recovering from a spinal cord injury (SCI), hand and arm movement is limited. Fortunately, tendon and nerve transfer surgeries can re-animate a muscle and restore function in the arm, wrist and/or hand, potentially opening up a world of possibilities.

"These operations are all about giving patients who've been through trauma greater independence and more control of their lives," says Allan Peljovich, M.D., MPH, a Shepherd Center consulting orthopedic surgeon.

For decades, surgeons reconstructed hand function in people with SCI strictly using tendon transfers. But over the past five years, Shepherd Center is among the first centers to explore transferring nerves in combination with or instead of tendon transfers for people with SCI. Based on this experience, doctors can determine what type of surgery will work best for a patient with SCI: using a tendon transfer, nerve transfer or a combination.

"One thing that sets our program apart is that we have the expertise and the ability to reconstruct arm and hand function with every surgical technique that's available," Dr. Peljovich says. "We can actually get a little bit deeper into exactly what kind of function would benefit the patient the most and then tailor our approach using a combination of techniques rather than having only one surgical option."

### How These Surgeries Work

When explaining tendon and nerve transfer surgeries to patients, Dr. Peljovich often uses the expression "Robbing Peter to pay Paul."

"We essentially are taking a tendon and/or a nerve from one place where there are other muscles or nerves that help perform the same function, and moving it to another. Patients don't notice the difference, and there is everything to gain from a successful transfer," he explains.

The two most common surgical goals are to regain pinch between the thumb and fingers and restore someone's ability to extend the elbow with strength. With those two functions alone, people can complete 90% or more of daily living activities.

For example, there are several muscles that help to flex or bend the elbow. Surgeons can take the tendon of the biceps muscle, which is one of a few muscles that bends the elbow, and transfer it to the triceps muscle which straightens the elbow. In doing so, patients can learn how to reuse the triceps muscle through rehabilitation and extend their arm, allowing them to get dressed and reach for things above their head with control. Since they have two other muscles that flex the elbow, there is no loss of that critical function.

Similarly, with nerve transfers, surgeons take a part of a nerve that feeds a working muscle, or sometimes part of a working muscle, and plug it into the nerve of the muscle that isn't working.

Since her surgery, patient Maggie Deery enjoys hobbies like painting again. In this photo, Dr. Peljovich consults with Maggie about additional functional goals she'd like to attain post-surgery with some of her artwork featured in the background.



### Helping Patients Regain Meaningful Function

Patients often share that these highly specialized surgeries have allowed them to get a part of their life back and be more independent.

"Most of the time, it's less about, 'I can hold my toothbrush again,' and more about the joy and amazement of getting back to hobbies and leisure activities," says Jana Candia, OT/L, a case manager in Shepherd Center's Upper Extremity Rehabilitation Clinic.

The functional gains also give patients a confidence boost and hope for the future.

"People can feel stuck after SCI: Hopes about their future suddenly seem like they are on hold, and these surgeries can help them jump that hurdle," says Dr. Peljovich, adding that in his 20 years of practicing medicine, the outcomes from these surgeries remain his favorite part of the job. "It's awesome to hear from people who are going back to school or work."

While the team often performs these surgeries on patients who are already being cared for at Shepherd Center, they also see patients from across the country and have developed protocols that can be shared with local therapists to maximize results no matter where patients live.

The Upper Extremity Rehabilitation Clinic at Shepherd Center offers a comprehensive treatment program. For more information on these reconstructive procedures and other services offered at the clinic, scan the QR code. \*





# Q+A

## Empowering Staff, Families and Patients Through Education

Carolain Paredes, BSN, RN, CRRN, Brain Injury Rehabilitation Program nurse educator, shares her passion for helping people through her job and injury prevention efforts.

BY DAMJANA ALVERSON

P  
staff  
profile



1. Carolain Paredes has worked at Shepherd Center for nearly nine years. 2. Paredes' job involves providing caregiver and staff education.

### Q: How long have you worked at Shepherd Center?

I have worked at Shepherd Center for nearly nine years.

### Q: How does your role contribute to the hospital's mission to serve patients and families?

I provide caregiver and staff education for the Brain Injury Rehabilitation Program therapy teams at Shepherd Center. Nurse educators teach staff new processes or changes in best practices that empower them to provide evidence-based practice services to our patients. We also provide some one-to-one education to families on caring for their loved ones when they go home as needed.

### Q: What is the most fulfilling part of your job?

I love helping people. It's what drew me to being a nurse in the first place. The way I see it, since I transitioned from being a nurse to a nurse educator, I participate in caring for the patients and families by providing education to the staff members who are directly involved with them. I share my knowledge, and if I don't know something, I look it up or find the resources needed to answer the questions staff may have.

### Q: How did you get involved with the Injury Prevention Program at Shepherd Center?

One of my goals is to educate the community by going to schools and events to share what I know and, hopefully, make people aware of what brain and spinal cord injuries are, how to care for them and, of course, how to prevent them. This led me to connect with our Injury Prevention Program to do more of this type of community outreach.

So far, I have participated in several online presentations for organizations like Mothers Against Drunk Driving and Students Against Destructive Decisions. I also had the opportunity to help with car seat safety inspections for staff, patients and families. I look forward to continuing this kind of work.

### Q: What is the most rewarding part about volunteering your time to injury prevention efforts?

As much as I love our patients and families, I hope that by devoting some time to providing education, I can prevent at least one brain or spinal cord injury. That hope is what makes these efforts so gratifying. \*

## INTERESTING FACTS

### EDUCATION

- Carolain is working on a master's degree as a clinical nurse specialist at South Alabama University.
- She has been a Certified Rehabilitation Registered Nurse (CRRN) for the past four years.
- She is Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS) certified and a Basic Life Support (BLS) instructor.

### FUN FACTS

- Carolain dances and performs Peruvian folkloric dances in festivals and events.
- She loves spending time with her family and dog, Sasha.
- Carolain is married to her high school sweetheart.

 More online at [news.shepherd.org](https://news.shepherd.org)

A young woman with blonde hair, wearing a black t-shirt and a green wristband, is sitting in a black wheelchair in a gym. She is smiling and holding a purple dumbbell in her right hand. The gym has a tiled floor, a rack of colorful exercise balls (red, blue, green, white) on the wall, and several treadmills in the background. A red bag with white text is hanging from the wheelchair's handle.

# RECOVERIES TO LESSONS TO

Car crashes. Diving accidents. Falls. Sometimes, the injuries that bring patients to Shepherd Center are preventable. With summertime in full swing and people participating in activities like diving, driving and getting outdoors, it is important to be aware of the risks you can avoid. For Karla Dougan and Jack Weeks, their remarkable stories of resilience and recovery give them a platform to share their messages in the hope that others stay safe when they are on the road or in the water.

BY PHILLIP JORDAN



(opposite page) Karla Dougan is majoring in exercise and sports science at the University of Georgia. (below) Jack Weeks participates in therapy at Shepherd Center.

**Two former patients share their stories of resilience and recovery in hopes that others learn to prevent similar injuries.**

# CHEER, SHARE



# A Message That Can't Wait

**Karla Dougan is determined to keep recovering from her injuries – and to keep spreading the message about texting and driving.**

1







**“Before the accident, my friends and I didn’t think anything about texting and driving. It’s just what we did. Nobody ever got hurt until I did.”**

Painful as it can be, **Karla Dougan, 21**, wants to share her story. All of it, no holds barred.

Over the course of an hour’s conversation, she does just that. She starts by explaining that her car accident on New Year’s Eve 2016 happened because she was looking down at her phone, texting friends. She calmly details how her car rolled over three times, finally coming to a stop upside down — its full weight on top of her — squeezing the breath from her chest. She even shares how much she misses all the activities she can’t do anymore and how slow the road to recovery has been.

But when Karla tries to talk about the impact her injury has had on those she loves most, that’s when tears come more easily than words.

“It really wasn’t until I was back home, probably a year after my injury, that it hit me what others went through because of all this,” she says. “It’s really hard to process all the stuff your parents went through — that I put them through. My brother was just starting high school, and he had to go through so much.”

The tears flow. Karla pauses, but only for a moment. It’s important

for her to share her story, she says, because she wants there to be fewer stories like hers. That motivation compelled her to create a memorable public service announcement for Shepherd Center in 2018 as part of the “Heads UP Georgia” campaign to end distracted driving.

“Before the accident, my friends and I didn’t think anything about texting and driving,” she says in the video. “Calling, Snapchatting, checking Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, it was fun. It’s just what we did. Nobody ever got hurt until I did.”

1. Karla enjoys working on her rehabilitation goals with her peers during the “Introduction to Wellness for People with Disabilities” class at UGA. 2. Karla attends her sorority bid day at UGA during the fall of 2019. 3. Karla’s father, Scott, and Karla share a joke on the University of Georgia’s campus. 4. Karla’s friend Saidee Perno, Alana Shepherd and Karla backstage at Project Rollway in 2018. 5. Karla graduated from high school in May of 2018. 6. Karla attended a high school football game after her accident in the fall of 2017 where players and friends greeted her.

## DID YOU KNOW?

**1 out of every 60**

people in the U.S. lives with a traumatic brain injury-related disability.<sup>2</sup>

## THE TOP THREE CAUSES

- \* Falls
- \* Struck by/against
- \* Motor vehicle





1. During the fall of 2018, Karla visited Shepherd Pathways for outpatient therapy and enjoyed exercising on the Lokomat®.
2. On the day of Karla's high school graduation in May of 2018, several members of her Shepherd therapy team came to her home to celebrate her accomplishment.
3. Karla participated in Project Rollway in 2018. Her friend Saidee Perno accompanied her down the runway.

## bottom line

**Put the phone on vibrate or silent, and put it where you can't see it while driving. This will reduce your urge to answer calls or read texts and emails.**

Karla's injuries were severe: She sustained an anoxic brain injury, injuries to her C-7, T-1 and T-12 vertebrae, a right femur fracture and a pelvic rim fracture, and a lacerated liver. She'd even gone into cardiac arrest before EMTs arrived on the scene to shock her heart back into rhythm and take her to Grady Memorial Hospital.

"It's incredible to see where she was back then and where she is now," says Andrew Dennison, M.D., medical director of Shepherd Center's Acquired Brain Injury Program. "Even just while she was with us, she went from being totally dependent on help for everything to really participating in her own care."

### Pathway to Independence

Indeed, at Shepherd Center, Karla had to relearn how to talk, swallow and eat — nearly every activity of daily living. Her progress was slowed by myoclonus, a condition that includes ongoing and involuntary muscle spasms, likely caused

by the lack of oxygen her brain received while she was pinned under her car.

During most of her time in physical, occupational, speech and recreational therapy at Shepherd Center, Karla's brain was still healing. There's a lot she doesn't remember from the six months she initially spent in 2017 in Shepherd Center's Adolescent Brain Injury Rehabilitation Program and at Shepherd Pathways, the hospital's comprehensive day and outpatient rehabilitation program for people recovering from brain injury.

But Karla returned to Shepherd Pathways in 2018 for another round of rehabilitation, commuting twice a week with her mom from Athens, Georgia, to continue working on her independence and using high-tech tools like the Lokomat® treadmill to condition her lower body to walk again. She also participated in Project Rollway, the hospital's annual fashion show fundraiser that benefits adolescent rehabilitation programs at Shepherd Center.

"I still have my dress from that event," Karla says. "A really good friend of mine rolled me down the runway. That was really fun, and I have lots of pictures from that event that I'm thankful for."

Today, Karla is a third-year student at the University of Georgia. She's majoring in exercise and sports science, and she will likely add either a minor or second major in nutrition. She's been living at home with her parents, who both work at UGA, but hopes to move out in the next year and live independently.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Shepherd Center receives about **5 referrals** every weekday for someone who experienced a vehicle crash.<sup>3</sup>

### OF THE VEHICLE CRASHES, THE LEADING CAUSES ARE:

- \* Automobile
- \* Motorcycle
- \* ATV
- \* Bicycle







Karla Dougan works on her rehabilitation goals with fellow UGA students Ashleigh Willis and Ashley Taylor, with guidance from Kevin McCully, Ph.D., a professor of kinesiology in the College of Education, through the "Introduction to Wellness for People with Disabilities" class.

## share the message

**Start thinking of the car as a place to accomplish one simple thing – driving. You may be surprised to find that driving becomes much less stressful when you give the task your full attention.**

**"You can live your life, but not at anyone else's expense. When you text and drive, it's not just your life that can change."**

Karla's already well engaged in the campus community as a member of a sorority and as a member of UGA Food-2Kids, a student-run nonprofit that partners with the Food Bank of Northeast Georgia.

An athlete at heart who played soccer, swam and did gymnastics in high school, Karla continues to push herself in ongoing outpatient physical and occupational therapy in Athens.

"I'm doing really well now; it's just a slow process to adjust to," she says. "Before, I was athletic enough that if I stuck with something long enough, I could get pretty good at it, pretty fast. That's how I thought rehab would go, but that's not always the case. Especially with a brain injury, my mind is learning slower than my muscles are. So, I can't do everything yet, but I'm on my way!"

### **Distraction-Free Driving**

Karla also continues to spread her message about safe driving.

"You can live your life, but not at anyone else's expense," Karla says. "When you text and drive, it's not just your life that can change. My experience changed so many other peoples' lives, and I could have put someone else in physical danger. I didn't, but I could have.

"I still have a pity party for myself from time to time, but I can't imagine how I'd feel if I'd hurt somebody else in that accident."

Karla's message is something the care teams at Shepherd Center deeply appreciate.

"She's such a great ambassador," Dr. Dennison says. "We're so honored to help patients like Karla through these really challenging situations. But she's right. These situations are preventable. We certainly hope others hear her message and learn from it."



Scan the QR code to view the public service announcement Karla created for Shepherd Center as part of the "Heads UP Georgia" campaign to end distracted driving.

Throughout his rehabilitation at Shepherd Center, Jack Weeks maintained a positive attitude and encouraged others.

# Take Another Look

**Jack Weeks' life changed with a single leap. His story isn't just a cautionary tale, though – it's also a story of hope.**



**Before his injury, Jack Weeks, 16, was the mischievous kid who would prank his friends by staying too long underwater, coming up in a dead-man's float. So, after Jack dove head-first into the Atlantic Ocean during a beach vacation, his cousin wasn't about to be a sucker again when Jack remained motionless after slowly floating back to the surface.**

But Jack wasn't joking this time. His head had struck the bottom of the shallow water, damaging his C-4 to -6 vertebrae and instantly paralyzing him from the shoulders down.

Quickly, though, Jack's cousin realized this was real. He got Jack to shore and found a doctor and EMT on the beach to perform CPR.

When Jack's mom, Cammie, reached the scene, another relative told her Jack was breathing.

"So, at first, we were relieved," Cammie recalls.

But as the EMTs loaded Jack onto a stretcher, Cammie's relief evaporated. She saw Jack's arms flop down, over the sides. Her heart sank with them.

"That's when I knew, uh oh, something's really wrong here," Cammie recalls.

Getting from that moment on June 27, 2020, to today — where Jack is learning to live independently in an adaptive apartment attached to his family's home in Gorham, Maine — has been an immense challenge. Thanks to the

love and support of his family, and care at Shepherd Center, Jack's story is an uplifting one now. Still, he's not done trying to scare his friends when it comes to the water — scare them straight, that is.

"Look before you jump," Jack cautions. "Before you do anything, really. Just be smart."

His mother is even more direct: "No diving."

### **Attitude is Everything**

Throughout his rehabilitation, Jack was always thinking of others. During his time at Shepherd Center, he was often called "The Mayor" for how quick he was to greet newcomers to the program and get them involved.

Jack says the community structure of Shepherd Center's Adolescent Spinal Cord Rehabilitation Program helped him mentally. He became lasting friends with other teenagers who'd sustained similar injuries. By day, the boys would motivate each other in physical and recreational therapy. After hours,

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

**Diving is the 5<sup>th</sup> leading cause of spinal cord injury.<sup>1</sup>**

### **share the message**

**The best way to enter the water is always feet first.**



1. Jack works hard during an outpatient occupational therapy session near his home in Maine.

2. Jack and his mom, Cammie, share a tight bond.



**“LOOK BEFORE  
YOU JUMP.  
BEFORE YOU  
DO ANYTHING,  
REALLY. JUST  
BE SMART.”**

they would challenge each other to wheelchair races in the hallways, put together movie nights and talk frankly about their hopes and fears.

“We all kind of knew what each other was going through and could help each other out,” Jack says. “We’d say, ‘hey, attitude is everything. Be positive. Don’t beat yourself up for what you did or how your injury happened. Just roll with the punches. Look at what’s in front of you.’”

As Jack progressed through his rehabilitation, Cammie took her own classes, learning to become Jack’s primary caregiver.

“Everyone at Shepherd Center was so kind and loving and giving of their knowledge and support,” Cammie says. “They really make it feel possible, that you’ll be able to do this. And you can, of course! I feel so comfortable taking care of Jack at home now.”

### **Jack’s Lair**

Jack returned to Maine in winter 2021 to a new home. Jack’s parents, who are divorced but remain close

friends, sold their respective houses to buy a larger place that would meet Jack’s needs. Now, the entire family — including his brother Gus, 9, and sister Maggie, 11 — is living together as “Jack’s Lair” comes to life: voice-activated lighting, heating and entertainment systems, an adaptive bathroom, and an easy-to-navigate living area of his own.

For Jack, a typical Saturday revolves around the same things most teenagers crave: a late wake-up call, time spent playing video games and texting with friends he made at Shepherd Center. If it’s nice, the family gets outside. If not, they don’t sweat it if they’re all still in their pajamas come the afternoon.

“That’s what’s important for other families to know,” Cammie says. “We laugh all the time. We do goofy things. We’re happy. Sure, it’s not always easy to stay positive, but you can’t go down those rabbit holes all the time. I look at Jack and see him smile, and I can say, ‘OK, we’re good.’”



### **CONSTRUCTION ZONE**

4. Jack’s new, accessible living room during construction. 5. Jack’s living room after construction. 6. Jack’s new bathroom during construction. 7. Jack’s bathroom after construction was completed.

**“Everyone at Shepherd Center was so kind and loving and giving of their knowledge and support. They really make it feel possible, that you’ll be able to do this.”**

**– CAMMIE WEEKS, JACK’S MOM**





1. Jack was joined by his little brother Gus during an outpatient physical therapy session near their home in Maine.  
2. Jack spent Christmas with his family in Maine.  
3. Jack heads to a friend's graduation from Shepherd Center wearing the shirt his friend designed.

Cammie wants families in other situations to feel the same way.

"We have 4.5 acres here at our house, and part of our long-term goal is to build accessible trails here to bring others out to enjoy the land," Cammie says. "No stigma, no worries. Just a place to feel happiness. We could also bring Jack's friends from Shepherd Center up here. Like a big summer camp for everyone to enjoy together."

### Looking to the Future

While the Weeks preach injury prevention whenever they have the chance, they also know they must look forward. And they remain thankful for the unexpected blessings that have emerged.

For Jack, that's meant a new outlook on life.

"Before, I wasn't really optimistic. I lived in the moment only," he says. "Now, kinda weirdly, I'm super optimistic. I know everything's a process. So I just go with the flow and look to the future. I'm hopeful."

For Cammie, the most rewarding outcome has been watching a previously disconnected family reunite.

"Our family's gotten so much stronger," Cammie says. "Things that Jack and I wouldn't have shared or talked about together, we do now. Our bond is tighter. We wish Jack wasn't injured, of course. But we've also realized what the important parts of life are. For us now, it's all about love, sharing your experience and helping others." \*

**SOURCES:** 1. National Spinal Cord Injury Statistical Center 2. Brain Injury Association of America 3. Shepherd Center referral data from fiscal years 2020 and 2021

**"We laugh all the time. We do goofy things. We're happy. Sure, it's not always easy to stay positive, but you can't go down those rabbit holes all the time. I look at Jack and see him smile, and I can say, 'OK, we're good.'"**

### DID YOU KNOW?



During the summer months (May-August), Shepherd Center receives

**33-37%**

**OF ITS REFERRALS FOR PEOPLE WITH ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY**

**&**

**35-37%**

**FOR PEOPLE WITH SPINAL CORD INJURY.<sup>3</sup>**



P

patient  
profile

Leah Cardi, OTR/L, occupational therapist in Shepherd Center's Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation Program, guides Reagan through stretching and balance training on the mat.

# LIFE *still* AQUATIC

Reagan Martin overcomes a spinal cord injury and respiratory challenges to return to the water she loves.

BY PHILLIP JORDAN



## AS REAGAN MARTIN TELLS IT, SHE AND HER TWO SISTERS ARE AS CLOSE TO AMPHIBIOUS AS TWO-LEGGED CREATURES CAN GET.

"We grew up in about two places — the pool and the lake," she says.

As the sisters grew up in Clayton, North Carolina, their love of the water evolved into aquatic competition. All three earned scholarships to swim competitively in college; Reagan, 20, went to Towson University.

So, when Reagan went on a weekend trip last summer to a friend's family home on North Carolina's Neuse River, it's no surprise the first thing she noticed was their dock. "I said, 'I'm going to jump off that before I leave here,'" she recalls.

When she did, Reagan took a running start, and at the last second, decided to dive head first rather than jump feet first. Even underwater, she heard the crack when her head hit the river bottom.

Reagan sustained a C-4 spinal cord injury that paralyzed her from the shoulders down

ventilator forever, I'd never get back in the water. I couldn't fathom that, so I never accepted that would be the end of my story."

Neither did her Shepherd Center care team. As Reagan's treatments continued, she noticed she could take shallow breaths on her own while she was being transferred to a portable ventilator. In November, a test showed a slight uptick in vital lung capacity. As she continued making incremental progress, the Shepherd care team started slowly weaning her from the ventilator. On December 9, she had a DPS implanted. To everyone's surprise, improvements came rapidly. Just 10 days later, after nearly five months on a ventilator, she came off it completely. A month after that, the DPS was removed, and her tracheostomy tube came out.

"I'm so incredibly thankful for Shepherd

another thing at another time," says David DeRuyter, M.D., Shepherd Center's recently-retired director of pulmonology and critical care medicine. "Everything is coordinated, and it all happens in unison to maximize patients' recoveries."

By March of 2021, Reagan was learning how to pick up objects, practicing slide board transfers to get in and out of bed and pushing longer distances in a manual wheelchair. She'll use all these skills when she returns to college.

"I told my mom," she says, "it's not a question of if — it's only a question of when I get my degree."

Best of all: Reagan has returned to the water. On March 11, 2021, a week before leaving for home, her therapists helped her swim in Shepherd Center's pool.

"It was incredible to get back in," Reagan



and led to serious respiratory problems. At Vidant Medical Center in Greenville, North Carolina, the medical team placed her on a ventilator. She also endured five surgeries, countless blood transfusions, adverse reactions to several treatments and a partially collapsed lung.

In late August of 2020, six weeks after her injury, Reagan was flown by air ambulance to Atlanta and admitted to Shepherd Center's ICU. She was still completely dependent on a ventilator. Her Shepherd care team immediately checked her lung capacity. It registered at zero. They checked again. Nothing.

Without any function of her diaphragm — the muscle that aids breathing — Reagan's body couldn't make use of a Diaphragm Pacing System (DPS), which can help transition patients from a ventilator and trigger their diaphragm to move on its own.

"That was a real low point," Reagan says. "Among everything else, I knew if I was on a

Center," Reagan says. "This place has changed my life in so many positive ways. I know for a fact that if I hadn't come here, I wouldn't be off a ventilator. And I wouldn't be pushing myself so far physically. They do everything they can to make you as independent as possible."

Case in point: The entire time Reagan remained on a ventilator, she was also engaging in speech, recreation, physical and occupational therapy as part of Shepherd Center's Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation Program.

"It was hard, but it made such a difference," she says. "As soon as I got off the vent and the trach, I could ramp up to doing more so much quicker. Doing rehab the entire time really made me feel like I was working toward something, that I had a role to play in getting better."

And that's by design.

"At Shepherd Center, you don't get treated for one thing at one time and then

1. Reagan Martin enjoys time in the Anna and Hays Mershon Secret Garden with facility dog Lanza. 2. Reagan does reach and balance training on the mat with coaching from occupational therapist Leah Cardi. 3. Reagan and occupational therapist Leah Cardi chat in Shepherd Center's Secret Garden.

says. "It reminded me of how far I've come, but it also gave me a new set of goals. I've now got a list of things to work on to get better — in and out of the pool."

"From where she was such a short while ago, it's absolutely awesome," Dr. DeRuyter says. "If it wasn't for her spirit and determination, I don't think she'd have gotten there. This is someone who was told she'd be on a ventilator for the rest of her life. She's shown an incredible spirit to not give up and just keep pushing and pushing and pushing." \*

## Shepherd Alums:

# From “I Can’t” to “I Can”

## Alexander Borges

ORLANDO, FLORIDA

For 15 years, **Alexander Borges, 50**, applied his doctorate in structural engineering to various projects in Puerto Rico. But when a job opened in Orlando, Florida, that focused on his passion for designing structures, he, his wife Licia and their two children moved to advance Alexander’s career. He has worked at the company ever since.

On October 26, 2020, Alexander visited Miami to inspect the roof of a client’s building. While he walked the area, the roof collapsed, and he fell about 35 to 40 feet, fracturing bones throughout his body and sustaining a traumatic brain injury.

For one month, he was in the ICU at Ryder Trauma Center at Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami in an induced coma. He did not emerge to a conscious state until three weeks after the fall.

On November 24, Alexander transferred to Shepherd Center’s Acquired Brain Injury Program, where he received intensive physical, occupational and speech therapy. In addition to the physical and cognitive challenges he overcame, Alexander was most thankful for the relationships he formed with his therapy team.

“The staff doesn’t only do their jobs, they create a relationship with the patients,” Alexander says. “For me, that positive relationship was the medicine I needed at that moment.”

Alexander’s progress was quick. A month after arriving at Shepherd Center, he was able to return home on December 24.

“At the end of the process at Shepherd, I felt like I had come back to myself and very close to the brain function before my accident,” Alexander says. “I am so blessed that even though I sustained severe trauma to my brain, I was able to come back.”

For some time after his accident, Alexander’s logical, engineering side took over, and he tried to rationalize what happened to him that day on the roof.

“The first thing I did was calculate the velocity I got to before I hit the floor,” Alexander says. “Then I decided to forget about the calculations. For me, faith is the foundation I use in all situations in my life, so I believe God is the reason I survived.”

As of May 2021, Alexander started work again at his engineering firm.

“We would like to let other patients and families know that there is always hope,” Licia says. “Having the strength inside you to keep the faith will help you accomplish what you need.”

After sustaining a traumatic brain injury, Alexander Borges is back home in Orlando and has returned to work.



## Ann Gressette

COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA

For the past 25 years, **Ann Gressette, 60**, has been riding horses. On April 11, 2019, Ann was riding her horse Apache at Doodle Hill Farm, a horseback riding school in St. Matthews, South Carolina. As they were doing a round of barrel jumps, Apache unexpectedly stopped before a jump, sending Ann falling forward toward the grass.

“I knew I had landed funny and told the group to call an ambulance,” Ann recalls.

After five hours of surgery at Prisma Health Richland Hospital in Columbia, S.C., Ann received news that she had sustained an incomplete C-5 to C-7 spinal cord injury. She transferred to Shepherd Center’s Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation Program on April 17.

Being a lover of the outdoors, it is no surprise that Ann’s favorite part of rehabilitation was recreational therapy, where she could participate in activities like gardening and riding horses.

“The [Anna and Hays Mershon] Secret Garden was such a gift,” Ann says. “My therapy team would hold onto me so I could stand, and I would pull weeds and plant flowers. It made me feel like it might be possible for me to do these things in the future when I got home.”

In June, Ann moved into the Spinal Cord Injury Day Program, a comprehensive outpatient rehabilitation program. While there, she took full advantage of the opportunity to participate in equine therapy.

“I was told by the barn manager that nobody had been to equine therapy as much as me,” Ann laughs. “The support the Shepherd staff gave me to start riding again with assistance was the key to getting me in the saddle again.”

Ann discharged from Shepherd in August 2019. She returned to the Day Program in June 2020 for additional outpatient therapy and is now enjoying the results of her hard work.

“My capabilities are so much better now,” Ann says. “I really do give Shepherd the credit for laying a great foundation. The wonderful therapy staff and the unsung heroes who provide patients personal care like helping with showers are a blessing.”

Today, she is back in the saddle attending equine therapy at Great Oak Equine Assisted Programs in Aiken every Friday.

“The blessings are always there,” Ann says. “Sometimes you have to look for them a little harder, and sometimes they don’t look how you thought they would, but they are there. If you stay focused on looking for the blessings, it makes a big difference in how everything else goes.”



Since her accident, Ann Gressette has returned to hobbies she loves like riding horses and gardening.



## Jordyn Sak

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

**Jordyn Sak, 23**, grew up athletic. In addition to doing gymnastics until her sophomore year of high school, she tried soccer, track and field, volleyball, swimming and diving.

It was diving that stuck. After being accepted to the biomedical engineering program at Georgia Tech, she made the diving team. Never one to shy away from a challenge, Jordyn pursued school and sport with determination. During a diving practice in the spring semester of her sophomore year, she jumped from the diving platform and, as Jordyn puts it, “hit the water wrong.”

Jordyn had sustained a concussion. As her symptoms persisted, she decided to sit out of competitive diving until the end of that season. She returned to diving in the fall of her junior year, ready to start anew, but unfortunately, she would meet a similar fate.

“I hit the water wrong again and was not feeling well,” Jordyn says. “I had some trouble with visual tracking with my eyes, some vestibular symptoms and headaches that persisted too long. This is when I decided to go to the Complex Concussion Clinic.”

Shepherd Center’s Complex Concussion Clinic (CCC) serves patients ages 12 and up who are experiencing symptoms from a concussion or mild brain injury.

“I received therapy for about two and a half months in early 2019,” Jordyn says. “Now I could understand my symptoms and have a plan of action to address them. By the time my treatments were done, I was feeling good, and my symptoms subsided.”

Jordyn has since funneled her experience with concussion into several worthy pursuits, including her involvement with Shepherd Center as a mentor through the hospital’s SUCCESS program. SUCCESS, or Success in College after Concussion with Effective Student Supports, is a research and development project to develop a peer mentoring program for college students recovering from concussions. It supports short- and long-term success.

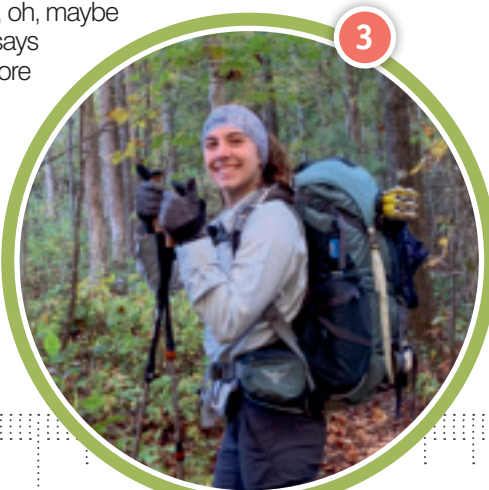
“It’s been so rewarding to turn a negative of getting two concussions into a positive by mentoring students who are newly injured,” Jordyn says.

Jordyn graduated from Georgia Tech in December 2020. Now, she’s pursuing her next challenge — hiking the entire 2,190-mile Appalachian Trail for six months.

“At first, I thought, oh, maybe

I’m crazy!” Jordyn says jokingly. “But the more I looked into it, the more I fell in love with the challenge. I want to take time to enjoy every moment and every day.”

Jordyn Sak is pursuing a new challenge — hiking the Appalachian Trail.



## Ben Trockman

EVANSVILLE, INDIANA

March 19, 2006, was the day that changed Ben Trockman’s perspective on life. At that time, he was a 17-year-old boy who, as he light-heartedly puts it, had his mind on three priorities.

“At the time, I was only thinking about my job, my truck and girls,” Ben says jokingly.

On that day in 2006, Ben was visiting Poole, Kentucky, with family and friends to go dirt biking.

Although he can’t remember exactly what happened, he knows he was thrown from his dirt bike during a race, resulting in a C-1 and C-2 level spinal cord injury.

After nine days in Deaconess Hospital, Ben was stable enough to be transported to Shepherd Center’s Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation Program.

“Going from a 17-year-old who knew nothing about disability to being thrust into the unique position where I had to count on someone to help with daily things like feeding and scratching my nose was quite a transformation,” Ben says. “Initially, I was so anxiety-ridden that I did not want to get out of bed or do therapy.”

Gradually, Ben opened up to his therapy team and started regaining his outgoing, confident personality.

“My therapy team was determined to encourage me,” Ben says. “It took me a long time – two weeks of complaining about getting out of bed and into my chair – but I eventually did it. Without them, I might still be sitting in that bed.”

Ben also received support from family and friends.

“Both my parents really benefited from the classes on how to care for someone with a spinal cord injury. Those classes prepared us for life after we returned home,” Ben says.

Ben returned home from Shepherd Center after about four months. Today, he funnels his outgoing spirit into advocacy pursuits such as working at Old National Bank as their diversity and inclusion outreach specialist and serving on his local city council.

March 2021 marked the 15-year anniversary of his injury. He offers two pieces of advice to anyone going through a similar experience.

“Focus on what you can control one day at a time,” Ben says. “My other piece of advice is something my mom and I embraced while I was at Shepherd Center. Give yourself 15 minutes a day to feel mad, sad or whatever you want. When that 15 minutes is up, get back to work and back to making progress.”



Ben Trockman works as a diversity and inclusion outreach specialist for Old National Bank and serves on his local city council.

# AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION

Through testimonials, public service announcements and other resources, Shepherd Center works to educate people on preventing injuries.

What better way to help prevent distracted driving than to hear a message from someone who has been injured as a result of it?

Karla Dougan was driving home from a friend's house when she glanced down at her phone to read a text. When she looked back up, she was off the road. She overcorrected, causing her car to flip over three times. The high school student sustained a traumatic brain injury and spent time at Shepherd Center for

**"People need to be educated on the risks of certain behaviors, like riding on all-terrain vehicles, not wearing seatbelts and diving into shallow water."**

**JIM BUTLER** | *Butler Wooten & Peak LLP*

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, car crashes are the leading cause of death for teenagers in the United States, and



this testimonial is one of several cautioning teens about the risks of distracted driving, speeding and not wearing a seatbelt.

These PSAs are part of Shepherd's innovative Injury Prevention Program. The PSAs illustrate the risks of certain behaviors to prevent catastrophic spinal cord and traumatic brain injuries caused by vehicle crashes, diving accidents, falls and other causes of injury.

"We call them 'Injury Prevention Ambassadors,'" says Emma Harrington, Shepherd Center's director of injury

prevention and education. "We've found that peer-to-peer messaging is very effective. Scare tactics do not work."

Aside from the PSAs, Shepherd Center also provides injury prevention education to schools, universities and workplaces through school visits, curriculum guides, and community resources and programs.

Shepherd Center's Injury Prevention Program was created in 2012 through generous donations from the late Tommy Malone, founder of Malone Law, and Jim Butler, a founding partner at Butler Wooten & Peak LLP. The two personal injury attorneys saw firsthand the effects of catastrophic injuries and wanted to help prevent them.

"People need to be educated on the risks of certain behaviors, like riding on all-terrain vehicles, not wearing seatbelts and diving into water," says Jim, who has seen the devastating results of these types of injuries. "Education can drastically reduce these injuries. It's really the key to prevention."

Tommy passed away in 2019, but his son Adam, now at the helm of Malone Law, is keeping his father's legacy alive.

"The law in the area of personal injury has two objectives," Adam says. "The first is to help people put their lives back together after a devastating and life-changing injury. The second,

rehabilitation. She tells her story in a gripping video public service announcement (PSA), urging teens to avoid doing what she did. As it concludes, she leaves viewers with this warning: "Never, ever look down. Ever."

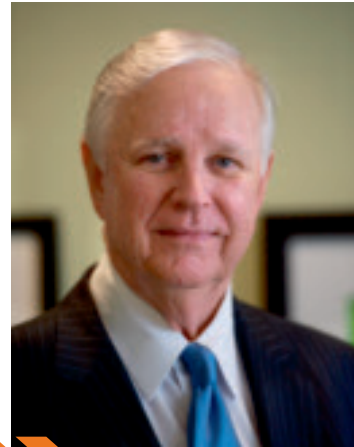


**Scan the QR code to view Karla Dougan's public service announcement.**



**"This shared common interest produced Shepherd Center's Injury Prevention Program and our passion for supporting it. Given our common interests, it only makes sense to work together."**

**ADAM MALONE** | *Malone Law*



**TOMMY MALONE** | *Malone Law*

and often overlooked objective, is to deter harmful conduct and prevent disasters in the first place. My dad and I felt that if preventable disasters could be reduced, there is no better spokesperson for bringing awareness to this issue than the nation's leading rehabilitation hospital and a few of the nation's most experienced personal injury lawyers. This shared common interest produced Shepherd Center's Injury Prevention Program and our passion for supporting it. Given our common interests, it only makes sense to work together."

The program is dynamic — constantly evolving and changing as needed to keep on top of the latest trends. For example, as electric scooters — available to rent instantly in cities — rose in popularity, so did the number of injuries they caused. Harrington received a grant from the Georgia Governor's Office of Highway Safety to develop a safety education program around scooters.

"We are not looking to eliminate scooters, but increase protective factors for riders to make them safer when utilizing micro transportation," Harrington says.

To start teenagers off on the right path when learning to drive vehicles, Shepherd Center has developed AutoCoach®, a free mobile app to help parents teach their teens to drive safely. A newer version of the app is now available to parents of teens with cognitive and physical disabilities. AutoCoach® was also funded by a

**"It's amazing — and unprecedented — to have donor funding we can rely on. It prevents me from having to be exclusively dependent upon grants and has enabled me to be innovative and pivot to where the data leads me."**

— **EMMA HARRINGTON**

*Shepherd Center's director of injury prevention and education*

grant from the Governor's Office of Highway Safety. For younger children, the hospital plans to conduct regular child seat safety checks in the future to ensure car seats are correctly installed.

While Harrington is experienced in securing grants to subsidize some injury prevention programs, she is grateful for donor contributions, which give her an additional funding source.

"It's amazing — and unprecedented — to have donor funding we can rely on," Harrington says. "It prevents me from having to be exclusively dependent upon

grants and has enabled me to be innovative and pivot to where the data leads me. I have the freedom and flexibility to provide the best preventive services available at the time."

Joel Wooten, a colleague of Jim Butler's and another founding partner at Butler Wooten & Peak, has also witnessed the aftermath of spinal cord and traumatic brain injuries. He is pleased his firm can support prevention efforts.

"Catastrophic injuries are life-altering, not only for the individual, but also for the entire family," Joel says. "It would be great if we never had another spinal cord injury case because of an injury."

For more information, visit Shepherd Center's Injury Prevention Program website: [shepherd.org/injuryprevention](https://shepherd.org/injuryprevention). ✨



**"Catastrophic injuries are life-altering, not only for the individual, but also for the entire family. It would be great if we never had another spinal cord injury case because of an injury."**

**JOEL WOOTEN** | *Butler Wooten & Peak LLP*

**If you are interested in contributing to Shepherd Center's Injury Prevention Program, please contact Jen Swindall at Shepherd Center Foundation: [jennifer.swindall@shepherd.org](mailto:jennifer.swindall@shepherd.org) or 404-350-7301.**

# GOOD MUSIC FOR a GOOD CAUSE



BY SARA BAXTER

## Country music superstar Chris Young performed a concert on April 8

to benefit Shepherd Center's SHARE Military Initiative, a comprehensive rehabilitation program empowering post-9/11 veterans and service members with brain injury to live with hope and purpose by providing high-quality and personalized care.

Toby and Kelly Regal graciously hosted the event in the backyard of their home, following CDC guidelines for gatherings regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Kelly serves on the Shepherd Center Board of Trustees and also serves as the 2021 chair of Women Shaping Shepherd. Toby is a former patient and former Foundation chair.

Chris Young performed through the Journey Home Project, a non-profit founded by fellow country singer Charlie Daniels, who passed away in 2020. The project brings awareness and support to organizations that help soldiers



On April 8, country music star Chris Young performed a concert benefiting the SHARE Military Initiative.

reintegrate and rehabilitate after they return home from service, and has supported Shepherd Center's SHARE Military Initiative since 2016. The event raised about \$300,000 for SHARE and The Journey Home Project.

Throughout the years, Charlie Daniels performed to raise money for the Journey Home Project and the organizations it supports – including an annual concert for SHARE. Since his death last year, Chris Young has stepped in to carry on the mission of the Journey Home Project.

Young, a Grammy Award-winning singer, played many of his hits and engaged with the audience throughout the evening, even when not performing. He also made a personal pledge of \$50,000 to the event.

Eighty people attended the fundraiser, and special guests included Daniels' widow, Hazel, and his son, Charlie Daniels, Jr., as well as several of their close friends and family members.

Travis Ellis, founder of Shepherd's Men, a group that advocates for veterans and helps raise money for SHARE through various programs, spoke during the evening, as did Michael Yochelson, M.D., MBA, the chief medical officer at Shepherd Center and a U.S. Navy veteran. The group also heard from David Rutherford, who spent eight years in the Naval Special Warfare Community as a Navy SEAL student, combat paramedic, operator and instructor, and is now a motivational speaker. \*



# SHEPHERD HOSTS FIRST-EVER ADAPTIVE GAMING TOURNAMENT

On February 27, 64 gamers congregated virtually to play Call of Duty: Warzone in the Adaptive Gaming Series — Shepherd Center Cup 2021. The tournament had a cash prize of \$1,000, but it also had another benefit — raising money for Shepherd Center patients.

In organizing the tournament, Shepherd Center had help from Evolve Gaming, United in Gaming and Gaming.gg. The event raised more than \$7,000 for Shepherd Center's Assistive Technology Center to help purchase adaptive gaming equipment, game licenses and computers for patients to use at the hospital.

In addition to introducing the tournament, Shepherd Center is also exploring the possibility of starting an e-sports program, which is a form of competition using video games.

"E-sports are already universally designed, so everyone can play," says Kristen Webber, MOT, OTR/L, BCPR, ATP, inpatient therapy manager in the Spinal Cord Injury Unit, who along with Shanna Thorpe of



the Shepherd Center Foundation, helped organize the tournament. "Regardless of ability, all gamers use technology."

In addition to providing a fun pastime, participating in e-sports can help patients reach their therapy goals.

"Gaming helps with building strength, learning assistive technology skills and

computer literacy, and can also facilitate vocational rehabilitation goals by teaching sequencing and timing," Webber says.

Organizers are hoping the Adaptive Gaming Series will take place several times a year. Beyond supplying Shepherd Center with the necessary equipment, the goal is to possibly offer scholarships to patients who enjoy gaming to help them purchase everything they need to play at home.

For more information, contact **Kristen Webber** at [kristen.webber@shepherd.org](mailto:kristen.webber@shepherd.org).

## Second Annual Fund Run and Roll a Great Success

When last year's Derby Day had to be canceled because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Shepherd Center Junior Committee (SCJC), the long-time organizers of the event, came up with another way to raise money for Shepherd Center and bring people together — even if it was virtually. They created the SCJC James Shepherd, Jr., Fund Run and Roll as a way to honor the hospital's co-founder James Shepherd, who passed away in December 2019. The inaugural event took place last September.

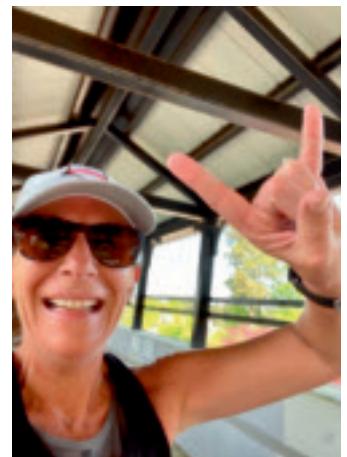
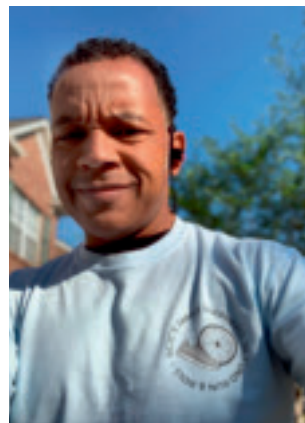
The event was so popular that the Junior Committee decided to make it an annual event. The second annual SCJC James Shepherd, Jr., Fund Run and Roll took place April 18–24, raising more than \$9,000 for Shepherd Center's Recreation Therapy Program. Beacham & Company Realtors helped sponsor the event. The race was once again virtual, and participants could run, walk or roll the

distance of their choice. This year 134 people — representing 16 states and Canada — participated in the race.

To make the event more interactive despite being virtual, participants were encouraged to join the SCJC Run & Roll Club on the Strava app to track their progress and cheer on other racers. There were also two fitness challenges and a Facebook photo challenge. To raise money, they could make a page on Shepherd Center's GoFundMe Charity site. Prizes were awarded to the top three fundraisers.

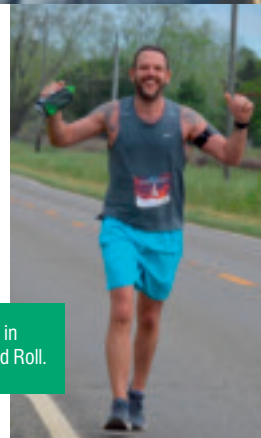
For more information about next year's event, contact Erica Spurling, signature events manager at Shepherd Center, at [erica.spurling@shepherd.org](mailto:erica.spurling@shepherd.org).

134 people from 16 states and Canada participated in this year's SCJC James Shepherd, Jr., Fund Run and Roll.



SHEPHERD CENTER JUNIOR COMMITTEE'S  
**SECOND ANNUAL  
JAMES SHEPHERD, JR.**

# FUND RUN & ROLL



# I Became a Bridge Builder because...

*Two individuals — a doctor and a former patient — explain why they have included Shepherd Center in their estate plans.*

Members of the J. Harold Shepherd Bridge Builder Society have committed to gifts beyond their lifetimes and are ensuring the future of Shepherd Center for many years to come. Legacy gifts are any major gift made as part of a financial or estate plan and are among the easiest ways to give back to Shepherd Center.

**For more information, please contact Jen Swindall at Shepherd Center Foundation: [jennifer.swindall@shepherd.org](mailto:jennifer.swindall@shepherd.org) or 404-350-7301.**





## Gerald Bilsky, M.D.

As a staff physiatrist for Shepherd Center's Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation Program and Brain Injury Rehabilitation Program, Dr. Bilsky has worked at the hospital for more than 20 years, including serving as associate director of the Brain Injury Rehabilitation Program. Now semi-retired, he returns to Shepherd Center as needed to cover for inpatient doctors who are taking time off. Below, he explains why he became a Bridge Builder.

### **BECAUSE I WAS TAUGHT TO GIVE BACK.**

I did not grow up in a family of means, but my parents taught me that there are always people who need more than you. This is a way of honoring my parents and acknowledging their values. Shepherd Center is an incredible place that does incredible work. We go beyond basic patient care, taking the extra steps to make it as positive and successful an experience as possible. I want to do my part to keep that going.

### **BECAUSE I FEEL A CONNECTION TO SHEPHERD CENTER BEYOND MY JOB.**

Shepherd Center is a unique hospital taking care of people with severe injuries. It is like a family. Former patients

still send me notes or check in with me long after discharge. And I also believe the staff has a special connection: We have a bond that goes beyond being colleagues.

### **BECAUSE I BELIEVE IN THE FUTURE OF SHEPHERD CENTER.**

The Shepherd family has been good to me and has treated me with respect. This is a way for me to show respect to them and the work they will do in the future. I envision the hospital staying true to itself and continuing to provide excellent care. I also hope that Shepherd Center becomes a leader in promoting social justice, equality and kindness – like it's led the way in so many other areas.



1. Former patient Duane Morrow has decided to give back to Shepherd Center because of his experience at the hospital and his hopes for what it can do to help others in the future. 2. Dr. Bilsky has worked at Shepherd Center for more than 20 years and has decided to include the hospital in his estate plans because of the connection he has to his job, patients and colleagues.

## Duane Morrow

After sustaining a spinal cord injury while playing rugby in England in 2004, Duane was airlifted back home to Atlanta and spent three months at Shepherd Center for rehabilitation. He learned how to adjust to life with quadriplegia and credits Shepherd Center for showing him life beyond injury. Now, more than 16 years later, Duane is still a regular fixture at Shepherd Center — whether it's competing with the adaptive rugby, softball, waterskiing and road racing teams, visiting patients as a peer support mentor, or attending meetings as a member of the Foundation Board or Advisory Board, of which he is currently the chair. This is why he became a Bridge Builder.

### **BECAUSE I AM GRATEFUL.**

What's magical about Shepherd Center is that the environment, the people and the technology allow you to find hope and realize life isn't over: In many ways, it is better. You can embrace the good that has come out of your injury by being around people who have already found the good. The atmosphere allows you to become part of a family. Through the years, I've seen how I could inspire people and how they inspire me.

### **BECAUSE SHEPHERD CENTER GAVE ME HOPE.**

In 2005, I was encouraged to attend my first Adventure Skills Workshop through Shepherd Center's Recreation Therapy Program. That weekend, I had the opportunity to try so many activities — scuba diving, jet-skiing, waterskiing, four-wheeling, rock climbing and more. Event after event, achievement after achievement, I learned I could still have fun and accomplish things. My father went with me, and we were both crying

tears of joy over what I could do. Shepherd Center helped me embrace the good that came out of my injury.

### **BECAUSE I BELIEVE IN THE FUTURE OF SHEPHERD.**

I hope Shepherd Center continues to be a place where others have the same opportunity to find new hope again as I did. I'd like to see the hospital quadrupled in terms of the size of its campus and that there are vast amounts of space for technology centers of innovation and recreation therapy. To me, those are the two most important parts of Shepherd Center. As a regular contributor, including Shepherd Center in my estate plans will be a continuation of what I'm already giving. Shepherd Center has had such an impact on my life, and I'm not sure I could write enough checks to pay it back. ✨

PLEASE JOIN US ON *November 6, 2021* AT FLOURISH | ATLANTA

*for an intimate gathering and celebration of*

*Honoring  
Dr. David  
F. Apple, Jr.*

SHEPHERD CENTER  
CO-FOUNDER  
AND MEDICAL  
DIRECTOR  
EMERITUS

THE LEGEND OF THE  
**LOOKING GLASS**

THE 2021 LEGENDARY PARTY

BENEFITING SHEPHERD CENTER

Melinda Dabbieri  
CHAIRMAN

Elaine Carlos  
Kari Carlos  
Angela Carlos  
CHAIRMEN-  
ELECT

In order to promote the health and safety of our patrons, Shepherd Center and The 2021 Legendary Party will follow CDC guidelines for event gatherings. Please visit [shepherd.org/legendary](https://shepherd.org/legendary) for more details.

This year, Shepherd Center has added a sweet, new twist to our fundraising efforts — peaches! Order delicious Georgia peaches for family, friends and business gifts delivered from the orchard at Pearson Farm in Fort Valley, Georgia. When you purchase peaches from the Peach Project, sales directly benefit the patients and families at Shepherd Center.

The sale lasts through early August or while supplies last. Visit [projectonpeachtree.org](https://projectonpeachtree.org) for more information.

Questions? **Contact**  
[peaches@shepherd.org](mailto:peaches@shepherd.org).



The Pearson family (above) has been growing Georgia peaches and pecans on the same land since 1885. Funds from the Peach Project will directly benefit patients and families at Shepherd Center.



Shepherd Center  
**PEACH PROJECT**





Deceased friends of Shepherd Center are listed first in bold print followed by the names of those making gifts in their memory. This list reflects gifts made to Shepherd Center between January 1, 2021 and March 31, 2021.



On May 11, Baker Audio Visual held a Hackers & Slackers Charity Golf Tournament to raise money for Shepherd Center. The company raised a total of \$40,000, which will directly benefit patients and their families. L to R: Keith Hicks, Kasie Grant, Dave Davis, Jacob Dylan.

#### **Dunbar Josh Abston**

Mr. James Cole  
Ms. Dorothy Hays  
Mr. Dean Makinster  
Mr. David Montague  
Ms. Terinell Tisdale

#### **Neil Adkerson**

Mr. and Mrs. Darrell W. Bartlett  
Mr. Wayne Dodd  
Ms. Crystal Gilbert  
Ms. Donnette Hughes  
Ms. Rachel Little  
The Honorable Barry Loudermilk  
Mr. Dean Melcher  
Mr. and Mrs. Corky Nall

#### **Laura and Karl Anschutz**

Ms. Esther L. Abisamra  
Ms. Hope Abisamra  
Mr. and Mrs. Greg Gersch

#### **Lida Young Askew**

Dr. and Mrs. Carter Smith, Jr.

#### **Dr. Bill Martin Bailey**

Mr. and Mrs. William T. Hopkins

#### **Robin Barclay**

Carats Inc.

#### **Lois Beauchamp**

Robert and Lois Bacigalupo  
Mr. and Mrs. Omer W. Franklin  
Ms. Suzanne M. Goggin

Mr. and Mrs. Wade Mitchell

#### **Helen Beltran**

Mr. and Mrs. James H. Shepherd III

#### **Janet Berna - In celebration of her life**

Ms. Florenda Sylvester

#### **Gwynn Lanier Blount**

Dr. and Mrs. Carter Smith, Jr.

#### **Robert "Bobby" Wheeler Boylston, Sr.**

Mr. and Mrs. C. Alexander Peterson

#### **Baylor Bramble**

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Blackman Baptist Church  
Mr. and Mrs. Travis Briley  
Mr. and Mrs. Lowell Brown  
Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Davis  
First Horizon-Thompson Memorial  
Mr. and Mrs. Edwin A. Jones  
Mr. and Mrs. Ty Jones  
Ms. Jennifer Miranda  
Ms. Carla Wilson

#### **Alan Breitman**

Ms. Ann R. Breitman  
Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Edahl  
Mr. Alex Hayne  
Ms. Audrey R. Madans  
Ms. Beth Rose Oxman  
Mr. Jay Schrimpf

#### **Lee Britt**

Mrs. Luann W. Joyner

#### **Ricky Britt**

Mr. and Mrs. Bryant Cooke  
Mr. Morris Greyson  
Mr. Patrick Heins  
Mrs. Luann W. Joyner  
Mr. and Mrs. James Mason  
Mr. and Mrs. Peter Wolgom

#### **Brian "BB" Brown**

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Dr. David F. Apple, Jr.  
Mr. Jeffrey H. Brasfield  
Mr. and Mrs. William V. Brown  
Mrs. Jarrett L. Davis  
Mr. and Mrs. John Dickman  
Mr. Albert S. Dillon  
Mr. and Mrs. David S. Dimling  
Mr. and Mrs. Carl Drake  
Ms. Mona Elsayeh  
Mr. and Mrs. Hal W. Field  
Mrs. Anne Haltiwanger  
Mr. and Mrs. Rod Hansen  
Mr. and Mrs. John C. Huffard  
Mr. Dean Melcher  
Mr. and Mrs. David Miller  
Ms. Ann Parker  
Mr. Charles M. Parker  
Mrs. Anne L. Preece  
Mr. Charles Raper  
Mr. Hugh Richardson, Jr.

Mr. and Mrs. William H. Schneidewind, Jr.

Mr. and Mrs. Dell B. Sikes  
Mr. and Mrs. Philip Still  
Mr. and Mrs. Stephen D. Tarr  
Mr. and Mrs. Samuel H. Weese  
Mr. John H. Weitnauer, Jr.  
Mrs. Anne R. Young Stacy

#### **Nan Brown**

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Mr. Albert S. Dillon  
Mrs. Anne Haltiwanger  
Mr. and Mrs. Rod Hansen  
Mr. Charles Raper  
Mrs. Alana S. Shepherd  
Mr. and Mrs. Philip Still  
Mr. John H. Weitnauer, Jr.

#### **Shirley Reynolds Brown**

Mr. and Mrs. William T. Hopkins

#### **Joy Butterfield**

Mrs. Gloria Dobbs Cowart

#### **Theresa Cantarella**

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Mrs. Nancy Rappa

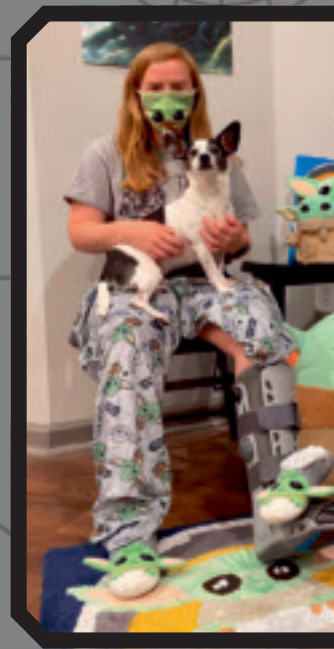
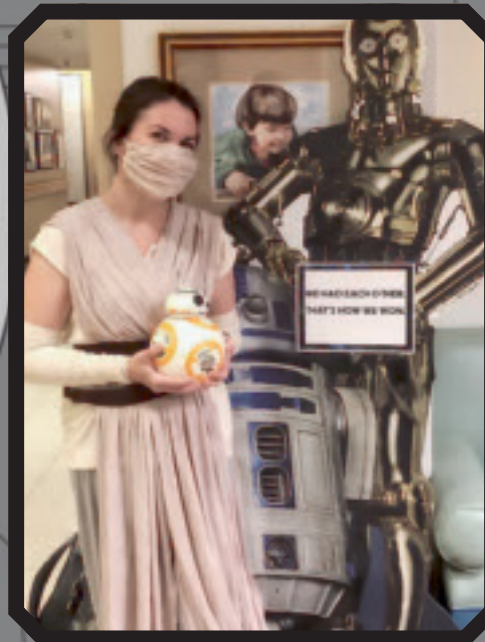
#### **Barbara Carman**

Mr. Billy Carman

#### **Linda Bishop Carman**

Mr. and Mrs. Ryan Haynie  
Ms. Patrice Jeter

**STAR WARS DAY:**  
Shepherd Center staff members had a little fun and dressed for a galaxy far, far away to celebrate Star Wars day on May 4.



Mrs. Cynthia Jones  
Ms. Sonya Millions  
Mr. Larry Mullinax  
Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Rakestraw  
Ms. Brooke Taylor  
Ms. Sandra Thimpson

**James Caswell**  
Mr. and Mrs. David M. Black

**Brian Clifton**  
Mr. and Mrs. Frank Martini

**Grady Woody Cole**  
Cole Family Charitable Foundation

**Bryan Cox**  
Mr. and Mrs. Terry J. Cox

**Nancy Laird Crosswell**  
Dr. and Mrs. Carter Smith, Jr.

**Debi Cziok - To Celebrate Her Life**  
Just Keep Believing Foundation

**Stephen Daniel**  
Ms. Barbara A. Pate

**Heath Allen Davis**  
The Honorable Michael H. Cason

**David Dawson**  
Ms. Brenda Coots  
Mrs. Kaye Dawson  
Ms. Marie DiFrancesco  
Mr. Amrey Harden  
Mr. Reginald Huley  
Ms. Marge McKee  
Stacey Morris  
Mrs. Patricia Reed  
Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Terry  
Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Whitfield

**Marie DeRaimo**  
Ms. Janet M. Habansky

**John Doe**  
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Parker

**Talmage "Tal" Dryman**  
Mr. Fred V. Alias

Mr. and Mrs. Donald C. Chapman, Jr.  
Mrs. Gloria Dobbs Cowart  
Mrs. Margaret P. Forbes  
Mr. and Mrs. M. Lamar Oglesby  
Mr. and Mrs. James H. Shepherd III

**Cindy Dundon**  
Ms. Pamela Ashmead  
Mr. Anthony A. Balthazar  
Mr. Brad Bass  
Mr. and Mrs. Paul Bendig  
Ms. Kathryn D. Bobbitt  
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Boyert  
Ms. Leslie G. Brown  
Ms. Kay Bryant  
Mr. William Cavanaugh  
Mr. and Mrs. Christopher Cocca  
Mr. and Mrs. Russ Coddington  
Ms. Bonnie Daniel  
Mr. Geoff Dorflinger  
Mr. and Ms. George M. Drake  
Ms. Sandra Dunn  
Ms. Leslie Finn  
Mr. and Mrs. John B. Frank  
Mr. Lance Friedsam and Mrs. Joy Lindal  
Mr. and Mrs. Ed Greer  
Ms. Sylvia Haefer Rosse  
Mr. and Mrs. John Hassett  
Mrs. Natasha Heidari Turner  
Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Huey  
Mr. and Mrs. Herbert M. Humphrey  
Mr. Jeremy Jackson  
Ms. Carol Jamieson  
Ms. Ann Jensen  
Ms. Cammie Jones  
Ms. Kathryn Jones  
Mr. and Mrs. Cliff C. Kimsey III  
Ms. Peg Maloney  
Mr. and Mrs. Richard A. Mathews  
Mr. Jay McClelland  
Mr. and Mrs. Jim McClelland  
Mr. and Mrs. Tommy McClelland  
Mr. and Mrs. John McCullough  
Ms. Jane McDonald  
Mr. Boyce E. Miller  
Mr. and Ms. Rick Milton  
Ms. Bunny Mitchell

Mr. and Mrs. Barry Mulhollen  
Mr. Edward T. Odmark  
Mr. and Mrs. Louie A. Pittman  
Ms. Lucie Primo  
Mr. and Mrs. Gary Rauch  
Ms. Marlene Reeves  
Retail Planning Corporation  
Mr. and Mrs. P.J. Richardson  
Ms. Shai Robkin  
Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Sabel  
Mr. and Mrs. Eddie Sanders  
Mrs. Alana S. Shepherd  
Mr. and Mrs. John L. Small  
Mr. and Mrs. Lee Strickland  
Mr. John Tanzola  
Mr. and Mrs. John E. Upchurch  
Mr. and Mrs. Raymond P. Wilbanks

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Mr. and Mrs. James H. Shepherd III

**Renee Sheehan Edwards**  
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Mrs. Dianne Loewenstein

**Donald Evans**  
Mrs. Marilyn S. Evans

**Devon Evers**  
Mr. and Mrs. Mark W. Slonaker

**Ingrid Fabbiris**  
Dr. and Mrs. Carter Smith, Jr.

**Kay Hood Faulkner**  
Ms. Kathy Clements

**Kate Gillis Felton**  
Dr. and Mrs. Carter Smith, Jr.

**Joseph Ferguson**  
Mr. and Mrs. Omer W. Franklin

**Donna Fetzer**  
Mrs. Faye H. Fetzer  
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**Jennie Fleming**  
Mr. and Mrs. Steve D. Holland

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Mr. Brad McFall  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Smith  
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph W. Watkins, Sr.

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Mr. and Mrs. John Riddle

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Mr. and Mrs. Steven M. Funk

**Matthew Gallagher**  
Mr. Travis Ellis

**Mary Budd George**  
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Ms. Janet Chase  
Ms. Margaret E. Collet  
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Mrs. Frank S. Goodman  
Ms. Shirley Gouffon  
Mr. and Mrs. David F. Haddow  
Mr. Joseph W. Hamilton, Jr.  
Mr. and Mrs. T. Rudy Harrell  
Mr. and Mrs. James A. Hatcher  
Mr. and Mrs. Brian D. Henry  
Mr. and Mrs. Harry C. Howard  
Mrs. Fay S. Howell  
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas H. Lanier II  
Mr. and Mrs. Frank H. Longino  
Ms. Barbara F. Martin  
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas H. Murphy  
Mr. and Mrs. Donald Nelms  
Mr. and Mrs. M. Lamar Oglesby  
Mr. and Mrs. Brooks B. Patterson  
Mr. and Mrs. C. Alexander Peterson  
Mr. C. Calhoun Peterson  
Mr. and Mrs. Hugh D. Peterson  
Mr. Hugh Richardson, Jr.  
Mrs. Alana S. Shepherd  
Mr. and Mrs. William T. Sherman  
Mr. and Mrs. Frampton E. Simons, Sr.  
Mr. Charles U. Slick





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Mrs. Joan D. Woodall  
Mr. and Mrs. S. Zachry Young

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Mrs. James M. Caswell, Jr.  
Mr. and Mrs. Tom Dopson  
Mr. and Mrs. Philip Dunklin  
Mr. Kevin J. McGowan  
Mr. Dean Melcher  
Ms. Elizabeth R. Pearce  
Mr. and Mrs. Edwin A. Wahlen

**James Gingrey**  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert A. Kilgannon

**Joseph Goldwasser**  
Mrs. Janice Goldwasser  
Mr. and Mrs. Alan M. Smith

**John D. Goodloe, Jr.**  
Dr. and Mrs. Carter Smith, Jr.

**Fran Gossage**  
Alpharetta Garden Club

**Frances Graham**  
Mr. and Mrs. James D. Schloss

**Frank Graham**  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert W. Goree

**Dr. Beverly Gregory**  
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Mr. and Mrs. Beau Hudson  
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**Rosa Ann Hadden**  
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**Danna Sue Hadsock**  
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Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Huggins

**John D. Harrison**  
Mrs. John E. Duggan

**Frank "Jerry" Heideman**  
Ms. Lisa Craig  
Mr. and Mrs. James H. Shepherd III

**Richard Hellmann**  
Ms. Andria Huntzinger

**Emma Jean Tillman Hensley**  
Mr. C. Calhoun Peterson

**Joann Hilliard**  
Ms. Kathy Clements

**Thomas Mark Hodges**  
Ms. Michelle Boudreaux  
Mrs. Patricia R. Hodges  
Mr. Christopher L. Phillips  
Mr. Frank A. Phillips  
Mr. and Mrs. Joe M. Phillips  
Mr. John H. Weitnauer, Jr.

**Lucas Holden**  
Mr. and Mrs. Jeff Spencer

**Ruth A. Homer**  
Mr. and Mrs. Omer W. Franklin

**April "Niki" House**  
Anonymous  
Mrs. Carol J. Blansett  
Mr. and Mrs. Randy Helcel

**Rita Hudson**  
Mr. and Mrs. Don Currin  
Mr. and Mrs. James R. Hall  
Ms. Marilyn P. McKnight  
Mrs. Alana S. Shepherd  
Mr. and Mrs. James H. Shepherd III

**Lloyd Huggins**  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Huggins

**Amy Isaacson**  
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Isaacson  
Ms. Joann F. Jacobs

**Randall Jarell**  
Mr. and Mrs. Hugh D. Peterson

**Luticia "Tish" Jennings**  
Mr. and Mrs. John Riddle

**Gary Glenn Kemp**  
The Quinn Family

**Walter Kempf**  
Mr. and Mrs. Dwight Kempf

**James "Billy" W. Key**  
Mrs. Darlaine B. McBurney

**Helen Kidd**  
Mr. and Mrs. Wes Campbell

**Joseph Kozlosky, USMC - For service in Korean War**  
Mr. and Mrs. George S. Gaillard

**Harry Lampley**  
Dr. and Mrs. Carter Smith, Jr.

**Bowdre Longo**  
J. Tribble Antiques

**Curtis Lovejoy**  
Dr. Jill M. Koval  
Dr. Donald Peck Leslie  
Ms. Julia Murphy  
Ms. Carol J. Olsen  
Mr. James H. Shepherd III

**Pen Lybrook**  
Ms. Phyllis Brooks

**Frank Maier**  
Dr. Luther D. Stacy, Jr.  
Dr. and Mrs. Carter Smith, Jr.

**Janice Manassa**  
Mr. and Mrs. John R. Cusick  
Mr. and Mrs. Bradley G. Johnson

**Lewis Manderson**  
Mr. Peter A. Dames

**Steve McDonald**  
Mrs. Gwendolyn Dula

**Mary Michels**  
Mr. Drew Klipp

**Carole Minter**  
Mr. and Mrs. J. Robert Davis

**Gregory "Greg" Moore**  
Ms. Kelly Moore

**Betty and Jean Mori**  
Mrs. Darlaine B. McBurney  
Dr. and Mrs. Carter Smith, Jr.



Shepherd employees celebrated Earth Day by wearing their Earth Day shirts and doing what they can to make an impact like recycling and using reusable water bottles.

# Remembering Curtis Lovejoy

## 1957-2021

On March 11, Paralympian and Shepherd Center athlete Curtis Lovejoy passed away from cancer. Curtis' love of swimming began when he participated in aquatic therapy as part of his rehabilitation for a spinal cord injury he sustained in a car accident in 1986. From there, he began swimming every day. His positive outlook, determination and talent led him to win 11 medals as a five-time Paralympian, break multiple world records and receive multiple honors, including being named to the Georgia Aquatics Hall of Fame and the Atlanta Sports Hall of Fame. Locally, Curtis served as a coach and competitor on the Shepherd Sharks swim team. Curtis was also a highly decorated world-class fencer despite having paralysis in his hands. Most of all, Curtis was our friend. He could frequently be seen rolling through the halls of Shepherd Center, providing hope and encouragement to families, patients and staff. We will miss him, and we send out love and prayers to his family, including his wife Mamie, who is a beloved member of Shepherd Center's staff.

Of swimming, Curtis said: "Sport is the way I express myself in so many different ways. When I am in the water, no one sees my disability. I am myself."



**Ron Muir**  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Rohr

**Ralph Murphy**  
Mrs. Ralph A. Murphy

**Virginia Murphy**  
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas H. Murphy

**Helen Taratus O'Connor**  
Mr. and Mrs. John T. Marshall

**Lucia O'Neill**  
Mrs. James M. Caswell, Jr.

**Athlene Hiles Paulk**  
Mrs. John E. Duggan

**Jeanette Willcoxon Peterson**  
Mr. C. Calhoun Peterson  
Dr. and Mrs. Carter Smith, Jr.

**Michael "Mikie" Rae, Jr.**  
Mr. and Mrs. Michael L. Rae, Sr.

**Dr. Harold Ramos**  
Mrs. Larry L. Prince  
Mrs. Alana S. Shepherd

**William Ramsey**  
Mr. and Mrs. Omer W. Franklin

**Donald L. Richardson**  
Mrs. Connie H. Richardson

**Sgt. David Ricker, Jr.**  
Ms. Lesley Lynn

**Shane Riggs**  
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas R. Boyce  
Ms. Drusilla S. Burton  
Mr. and Mrs. Gary Burton  
Mr. and Mrs. Lester R. Riggs  
Ms. Helen W. Swafford

**F.D. "Red" Robertson - For a life well lived**  
Dr. Anna Elmers

**Dora Ann Rogers**  
Ms. Merle Evans  
Mr. and Mrs. Roswell L. Walburn

**Kenny Rogers - You gotta know when to hold 'em**  
Dr. Anna Elmers

**Emily Hart Rosen**  
Mr. and Mrs. David L. Burch

**Travis Roy**  
Mr. and Mrs. Richard B. Goodsell

**Louise Royer**  
Ms. Kathy Clements

**Jay Rubel**  
Preston Mangus

**Cecil Collins Scanlon**  
Dr. and Mrs. Carter Smith, Jr.

**Suzi Schatzman**  
Ms. Virginia Lippincott

**Harold Shepherd**  
Mr. Peter A. Dames  
Mr. and Mrs. Omer W. Franklin  
Mrs. Patricia W. Ivy  
Mr. and Mrs. Charles A. Meriwether, Jr.

**James Shepherd**  
Mr. Peter A. Dames  
Mr. and Mrs. Paul R. Dopp  
Mr. George L. Hewes

Frank W. Holas Charitable Trust  
Mr. Dean Melcher  
Mr. and Mrs. Charles A. Meriwether, Jr.  
Mr. and Mrs. Bennett R. Sands  
Mr. and Mrs. Jim Unger

**Martha Poer Sibley**  
Dr. and Mrs. Carter Smith, Jr.

**Jean Sipes**  
Ms. Kathy Clements

**George "Carvy" Snell**  
Mr. C. Calhoun Peterson

**Zeke Snow**  
Mr. Brian Versluys

**Robert Soukup**  
Mrs. Sarah A. Morrison  
Mr. James H. Shepherd III  
Mr. and Mrs. Mark W. Slonaker

**Margaret Armstrong Staton**  
Ms. Louise S. Gunn

**Mark Steele**  
Ms. Carol J. Olsen



**G. Emory Sumner**

Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Huggins

**Kenneth Taratus**

Anonymous

Mr. Shepard B. Ansley

Dr. David F. Apple, Jr.

Mrs. Nancy S. Brewer

Mr. Bill Browning

Mr. and Mrs. Norris A. Broyles, Jr.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Coleman Budd

Mrs. Nancy B. Carithers

Mrs. James M. Caswell, Jr.

Mr. and Mrs. Donald C. Chapman, Jr.

The Community Foundation for

Greater Atlanta

Mrs. Jarrett L. Davis

Mrs. John E. Duggan

Mrs. Paul A. Duke

Mrs. Margaret P. Forbes

Dr. and Mrs. John C. Garrett

Mr. and Mrs. S. T. Glover

Mrs. Frank S. Goodman

Mrs. Hix H. Green, Jr.

Mr. and Mrs. C. Dale Harman

Mr. and Mrs. Harry C. Howard

Ms. Frances R. Huber

Mrs. Henrietta P. Jordan

Mr. and Mrs. Michael L. Keough

Ms. Carla T. Knobloch

Mrs. Carl W. Knobloch, Jr.

Mr. and Mrs. John T. Marshall

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Mrs. Elizabeth Rosenbaum

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Mr. and Mrs. Crawford M. Sites, Jr.

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Mr. and Mrs. James D. Schloss

**Elizabeth "Liz" Towles**

Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth S. Bell

Mrs. James M. Caswell, Jr.

Mrs. Gloria Dobbs Cowart

Mr. Thomas Curnes

Mr. and Mrs. John S. Dryman

Mrs. Paul A. Duke

Mrs. Frank S. Goodman

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Mr. and Mrs. James A. Hatcher

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Mrs. Carl W. Knobloch, Jr.

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Mr. Charles U. Slick

Mr. Philip Starr

Mr. R. Dean Starr

Mr. and Mrs. S. Zachry Young

**Wendell Turner**

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Amy Faulkner

Mr. and Mrs. Andy Fountain

Ms. Jackie Gillie

Ms. Gretchen Griesmer

Ms. Laura Hinton

Shawn Jones

Mr. Steve Kotten

Ms. Gail Mitchum

Ms. Larryce Peterson

Ms. Abigail White

**Reginald "Reggie" Vachon**

Dr. and Mrs. Currell V. Berry

Mrs. Ann H. Caverly

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas M. Chase

Mr. James W. Coaker

Mr. Marcus A. Cook III

Mr. and Mrs. Brian Deason

Mr. Miles Dempsey

Mrs. Richard L. Dempsey

Mr. and Mrs. Philip Dunklin

Mrs. Barbara K. Furbish

Mr. and Mrs. James H. Gash, Jr.

Mr. John Goossen

Mr. and Mrs. Oliver W. Holmes, Jr.

Mr. and Mrs. Randolph L. Hutto

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Keegan

Mr. and Mrs. Frederick P. Landers, Sr.

Mrs. William F. Leahy

Ms. Susan Lindley

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph V. Quarles

Mr. and Mrs. K. K. Roe

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas A. Ross

Mr. and Mrs. Dell B. Sikes

Mrs. Laura Smith Spearman

Mr. W. Glenn Viers

**Marion Hay Vincent**

Mr. and Mrs. Wesley Bales

Mr. Jeffery Butts

Mr. and Mrs. William V. Counts



Congratulations to the many Shepherd Center nurses who gathered to celebrate the numerous honors and awards they have received during National Nurses Month in May.

**DHS Class of 1965**

Ms. Edith Plowden

Ms. Ginny Robinson

Mr. and Mrs. Don Scraper

B.G. Walsh

**Scott Walker**

Mr. and Mrs. Donald H. Bailie

**Evelyn Forehand Warren**

Mr. C. Calhoun Peterson

**Dot Watkins**

Mr. Jennings E. Watkins

**David M. Wheeler**

Ms. Sally Wheeler

**Dr. Dale Willis - A wonderful father, husband, and friend**

Dr. Anna Elmers

**Stanley Willis**

Mr. and Mrs. Robert G. Willis

**Judge Dan P. Winn**

Mr. Frank C. Winn

**Eugenia "Gene" Wood**

Mrs. James M. Caswell, Jr.

**Jay Woodruff**

Mrs. Katherine W. Williams

Ms. Elizabeth W. Willis

**Jay Woodside**

Mr. and Mrs. Milton H. Woodside, Jr.



The Makers Making Change chapter at Shepherd Center hosted a hack-a-thon to develop innovative solutions to common challenges for the hospital's patients and families.

Honorees are listed first in bold print followed by the names of those making gifts in their honor. This list reflects gifts made to Shepherd Center between January 1, 2021 and March 31, 2021.

**Owen Anderson**  
Mr. and Mrs. Larry Barnhill

**Robert Antonisse - Happy Retirement**  
Mr. and Mrs. James H. Shepherd III

**Dr. David Apple, Jr.**  
Mr. and Mrs. Christopher R. Hardage  
Mr. Roger F. Hensley

**Dr. Debbie Backus - Congratulations!**  
Dr. David F. Apple, Jr.

**Dr. Deborah Backus - Excellent Board Presentation**  
Dr. David F. Apple, Jr.

**Jacqueline Baron Lee - Welcome!**  
Dr. David F. Apple, Jr.

**Anna Berry - Good Presentation!**  
Dr. David F. Apple, Jr.

**Dustin Biggerstaff**  
My Running Store LLC

**Dr. Brock Bowman and his team**  
Mr. Robert R. Robillard and Mrs. Melissa A. Coburn

**Nell Bradbury - Happy Birthday**  
Ms. Marsha P. Mooror

**Bert and Joy Burns**  
Ms. Ann R. Howell

**Cole Burton**  
Mr. Ricky Bryant

**Angela Carlos**  
Mr. and Mrs. James A. Carlos

**Kari Carlos**  
Mr. and Mrs. James A. Carlos

**Rebecca Causey**  
Ms. Kathy Portnoy

**Louise Alexis Chapman**  
Mr. and Mrs. James H. Shepherd III

**James Chase - Thank you for all you do**  
Ms. Anne W. Geddes

**Ismari Clesson - Great Research Work!**  
Dr. David F. Apple, Jr.

**Jill Cothron**  
Mrs. Connie H. Richardson

**Mr. and Mrs. Frank Craft**  
Ms. Marsha P. Mooror

**Mr. and Mrs. Page Crozer's Anniversary**  
Dr. and Mrs. James T. Duncan, Jr.

**Allan DaPore**  
Nixon Peabody LLP

**Dr. Anna Elmers**  
Nixon Peabody LLP  
Mr. and Mrs. Tom Wingfield

**Kevin Fitzgerald**  
Nixon Peabody LLP

**Taylor Fralick Adkins**  
Ms. Jacqueline Fralick

**Jill Glass - Happy Birthday**  
Ms. Debra Block

**Mr. and Mrs. Jack Glass**  
Ms. Marsha P. Mooror

**Robert Goree**  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert W. Goree

**Connor Gow**  
Ms. Susan Gow

**Gary Herber**  
Ms. Eleanor Agan  
Mr. Rogers King  
Mr. and Mrs. Mark S. Telling

**Keith Hinton**  
Ms. Tonya Harbison

**Audrey Grace Holder**  
Ms. Pamela Holder

**Wanda Hopkins**  
Dr. and Mrs. Carter Smith, Jr.

**Mr. and Mrs. Phil Humann**  
Ms. Marsha P. Mooror

**Lane Hollomon and Family**  
Ms. Kathy Clements

**Lynn Hyatt**  
Ms. Rosalyn Adams

**Dr. Mike Jones**  
Mrs. Sara C. Atwell

**Casey Kandalakis**  
Dr. David F. Apple, Jr.

**Karen Kaye**  
Dr. and Mrs. Basil B. Margolis



AJ Quetta and Mia McCullough, patients in Shepherd Center's adolescent rehabilitation program, tried Face the Cookie, a game where patients test skills like neck and head control, endurance, seated balance and core strength to get a delicious cookie from their forehead to their mouth using only their face muscles.



**Taylor Keating**  
Mrs. Beverly D. Keating

**Meghan Keller**  
Dr. and Mrs. Thomas F. Keller

**Susan Kendall**  
Ms. Victoria Hood

**Mr. and Mrs. Clinton Kennedy**  
Ms. Marsha P. Moorer

**Katie Kimball - With appreciation**  
Don Waite and Family

**Patrick Kirwan**  
Dr. and Mrs. David T. Watson

**David Kruetz - Enjoy Retirement!**  
Mr. James H. Shepherd III

**Dr. Donald Peck Leslie**  
Mr. and Mrs. Christopher R. Hardage  
William Howard Flowers, Jr. Foundation, Inc.

**Dr. Sherrill Loring**  
Mrs. Pat Geis

**Gail Mack**  
Major General and Mrs. David R. Bockel

**Chris Madsen**  
Mr. and Mrs. Mark M. Whitney

**Bernie Marcus**  
Mr. and Mrs. David M. Ratcliffe

**Dr. Allen McDonald**  
Mr. and Mrs. Kelly F. Caudle

**Caroline Moore**  
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Moore

**John Moore - Happy Birthday**  
Mr. Mike Moore

**Jeff Morrison - Get well**  
Dr. David F. Apple, Jr.

**Sarah Morrison - Excellent State of the Center**  
Dr. David F. Apple, Jr.

**Sarah Morrison**  
Mr. and Mrs. Christopher R. Hardage

**Ryan Narramore**  
Anonymous

**Dr. Laurie Nash Baker - Excellent Board Presentation**  
Dr. David F. Apple, Jr.

**Carolain Paredes - Congratulations on Attitude Award!**  
Dr. David F. Apple, Jr.

**Ellen R. Perry**  
Mr. Roland C. Ralph

**Zachary Poss**  
Mr. and Mrs. E.T. Laird

**Cody Reyes**  
Mr. Ronald R. Reyes

**Trenia and Bruce Reynolds**  
Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Kellum

**Joey Roman**  
Mr. and Mrs. R. P. Rogers

**John Rooker**  
Mr. and Mrs. Shaler Alias

**Hamano Ross**  
Ms. Wanda H. Ross

**Cara Roxland - Good Job!**  
Dr. David F. Apple, Jr.

**Shannon Schneider**  
Anonymous

**Alex Seblatnigg - Happy 50th Birthday!**  
Ms. Leigh A. Beakley  
Ms. Lisa Dwyer  
Ms. Lisa Eagen  
Ms. Teresa Ebbs  
Ms. Whitney Marshall  
Ms. Kristin Peck  
Ms. Charlotte Terrell  
Ms. Jessica Williams

**Alana S. Shepherd**  
Mrs. Mynel Yates DuBose  
Mrs. Betty Ann Inman

**Shepherd Family**  
Mr. and Mrs. Larry M. Cowman  
Mr. and Mrs. Christopher R. Hardage

**Shepherd Center Apothecary Team**  
Anonymous

**Shepherd Center Senior Management Team**  
Ms. Jessica Williams

**Shepherd Center Staff**  
Mr. and Mrs. Christopher R. Hardage

**Shepherd Center - Thank You and God Bless**  
Anonymous

**Shepherd Pathways**  
Mr. and Mrs. David Mast

**Clyde Shepherd III - Happy Birthday**  
Bickers Consulting Group, LLC

**Jeanne Smith**  
Mr. and Mrs. James B. Peters

**Shepherd Snapp**  
Ms. Rosemary Bryant

**Barbara Stanford**  
Ms. Madison Stanford

**Wayne Sweezy**  
William Howard Flowers, Jr. Foundation, Inc.

**Heather Tarpley**  
Mr. and Mrs. Kelly F. Caudle

**Annelies Price Taylor**  
Ms. Anne Arwood

**Mr. and Mrs. James Thompson**  
Mr. and Mrs. Charles E. Thompson

**Shanna, Lydia and Derek Thorpe**  
Mr. Viraj Deshmukh



Shepherd Center co-founder and medical director emeritus David Apple, M.D., celebrated his 85th birthday on April 16.

**Dr. Ben Thrower**  
Mr. and Mrs. Gerald King

**Dr. Ben Thrower - Good Presentation!**  
Dr. David F. Apple, Jr.

**David Tillem**  
Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Tillem

**Hannah Toles**  
Ms. Melissa Fuller

**Jarrad Turner - Thank you for speaking with Cub Scout Pack 575**  
Mr. Wesley Reed

**Jennings Watkins**  
Mr. James L. Watkins

**Joe Watkins**  
Gulfstream Aerospace Corp.

**Kelly White**  
Mr. and Mrs. Ronald K. White

**Krissy Williams - Happy 50th Birthday**  
Anonymous

**Chris and Sharon Wooten**  
Mr. and Mrs. Kelly F. Caudle

**Jim Yarbrough - Happy Birthday**  
Anonymous

**Mak Yost**  
Ms. Candace English



# Shepherd Center

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404-352-2020 [shepherd.org](http://shepherd.org)  
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## Family Created Us. Culture Sustains Us.

### **SHEPHERD CENTER HAS RELEASED A NEW VIDEO TITLED "FAMILY CREATED US. CULTURE SUSTAINS US."**

It is a celebration of both the hospital's continuum of care and approach to treatment, taking you on a journey from the Shepherd family identifying a need for a stand-alone rehabilitation facility in the Atlanta area to growing a hospital that specializes in spinal cord injury, brain injury, stroke, multiple sclerosis, spine and chronic pain, and other neuromuscular disorders. But perhaps the biggest differentiating factor is the Shepherd Center culture of hard work, humor and hope. \*



Scan the QR code  
to take a look.

