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OF CELEBRATION!**

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Rehabilitation **INSIGHT**

A publication of Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital

Fall 2018 | expertsinrehab.com



Back in the Classroom

When 24-year-old Kira Stone and her fiancé, Brandon Benenati, welcomed in the New Year in January 2017, they had an exciting year ahead. In the planning stages since 2015, their wedding was scheduled for the summer and both were looking forward to the “big day” and the start of a happy life together.

Just eleven days later, their world turned upside down. On Kira’s way in to work as a kindergarten teacher in Dolgeville, NY, an oncoming car crossed the middle line and hit her car head on. She was airlifted to Albany Medical Center where she spent the next three weeks, two in the ICU.

“I have no recollection of the accident or my time at the medical center,” said Kira, who would not regain consciousness for several weeks.

Her injuries were devastating. In addition to a traumatic brain injury, Kira suffered 16 broken

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 **Sunnyview Rehabilitation
Hospital**

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Rehabilitation Insight is a publication of Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital. The goal is to bring timely issues of acute medical rehabilitation, including updates and advances of the hospital and its foundation, to the forefront.

To stay in touch with the latest news from Sunnyview, please send your email address to Sunnyviewfoundation@sphp.com

Welcome

In September, Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital held a combined celebration marking its 90th anniversary and Art for the View. The event, which was held at the picturesque River Stone Manor in Schenectady, brought together supporters, past and present colleagues, and grateful patients. The heartfelt stories shared that evening reminded me of just how far Sunnyview has advanced since opening in 1928 as a 10-bed hospital caring for children battling polio.

Throughout the years, Sunnyview has grown in size and scope, continuously researching the most up-to-date treatments and technology to provide clinically advanced rehabilitation. You will read more about Sunnyview's current research initiatives and publications on page 8 in this issue. That ongoing commitment to research and innovation has made Sunnyview a leader in acute care rehabilitation in the Capital Region and beyond.

In this issue you'll also read about Sunnyview's profound impact on the lives of individuals experiencing traumatic illness or injury. You'll read about Kira Stone, a young kindergarten teacher whose future was suddenly put on hold after suffering a traumatic brain injury. You'll also learn more about how our ventilator weaning program is successfully helping individuals like Ron Walczak of Bennington, Vermont breathe on his own.

I am proud to be a part of Sunnyview and recognize that the advanced care we provide would not be possible without your generous support. During this season of thanks, we are especially grateful for all you have done and all you continue to do for Sunnyview.

From our family to your family, Happy Holidays!



Chip Eisenman

Chief Executive Officer



Address Change? Duplicate Mailings?

If your address has changed or if you receive more than one copy of our newsletter, please alert the Foundation office at (518) 382-4586 or sunnyviewfoundation@sphp.com so that we can streamline our database.

Thank you!

Kira Stone celebrates her graduation with her parents.



Back in the Classroom

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bones, internal bleeding, and damage to many organs, including her lung, liver and spleen.

On February 2, Kira was transferred to Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital's Neuro-Rehab Institute and admitted to the Traumatic Brain Injury program.

"Sunnyview's Traumatic Brain Injury Center of Excellence provides a comprehensive continuum of care, including a Coma Recovery Program, Inpatient Acute Rehabilitation Program, Outpatient Neurological Center, Driving Center and Sports Concussion Program," noted Paul Novak, MS, OTR, director.

Kenneth Shapiro, MD, was Kira's psychiatrist at Sunnyview. He noted that upon admission, Kira was considered low-level in her responsiveness – in other words, she was not responding appropriately to her surroundings. It was important to let her brain recover, but also to re-establish the pathways for normal functioning.

"Like all patients at Sunnyview, Kira had three hours of therapy each day," stated Dr. Shapiro. "Through physical and visual stimulation, and with repetition that is fundamental to therapy, we helped

retrain Kira's healing brain for normal and efficient patterns of behavior."

Kira remembers the early days at Sunnyview and the fact that she was tired all the time. "All I wanted to do was sleep," she recalled. "But my therapists wouldn't have it!" She persevered, participating in intense physical therapy to get her walking again, occupational therapy to help with her hand movement and fine motor skills, and speech/language therapy to work on her cognitive skills.

"It was frustrating and, at times, painful, but the best thing for me was therapy," she now admits.

Kira especially enjoyed aquatic therapy in Sunnyview's Golub Therapy Pool. "The pool was fun and warm ... and was something different to do!" she said.

In addition to the pool, Kira found the pet therapy program to be a bright spot in her stay. Volunteer handlers, many from the Schenectady Chapter of Therapy Dogs International (TDI), bring certified therapy dogs to visit with patients in the therapy gym.

"There is an emotional benefit to having the dogs visit, and even more importantly, the program serves as an opportunity for patients to get out of their rooms and socialize with other

patients," noted Jennifer Battle, CTRS, lead recreation therapist.

On April, 3, nearly three months after the accident, Kira returned home.

"It was my mother's birthday, so my coming home was a great birthday present!" she said. Four months later on August 5, at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo in Syracuse, Kira and Brandon stood before 175 family and friends and were married.

Kira returned to her kindergarten class in September. "A full-time physical aide was hired to assist me with walking the class to special activities, helping me walk outside during fire drills and other things for which I needed help."

Earlier this year, on May 6, Kira received a master's degree from Utica College. She continues outpatient therapy twice weekly in Little Falls, NY.

"There are still things I can't do, like sitting on the floor with my students, and I'm limited with the physical activities that I used to enjoy, like running, hiking and karate," she added.

"I am slowly making progress at becoming more and more physically independent to the greatest extent my body is capable of. I'm grateful to Brandon, who has been my rock, to my family ... and to so many people for helping me get to where I am today!"

2018 was a Year of Celebration!



Wednesday, July 25, 2018
Saratoga Race Course, "At the Rail Pavilion"
Saratoga Springs



Art Show
and 90th Anniversary
Friday, September 21, 2018
River Stone Manor,
Schenectady



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Individualized Outpatient Rehabilitation

In August 2017, Albert Bowdish underwent a fifth back surgery for spinal stenosis, a medical condition in which the spinal canal narrows, compressing the spinal cord and nerves. After his surgery, Albert, and his wife, Edith, were told he may never walk again. Albert came to Sunnyview with the goal of being able to simply transfer from his bed to his wheelchair. After just 2 1/2 weeks of intensive inpatient rehabilitation with therapist Barbara Scheidel, Albert began seeing marked improvements.

After his inpatient stay, Albert continued his therapy as an outpatient at Sunnyview Therapy Services at Socha Plaza in Glenville with Matt Frear, DPT. He had outpatient therapy with Matt after his previous surgeries, and appreciated the familiarity and continuity of his care. The individualized therapy services Albert received helped him regain his ability to walk, using only a cane for support.

Sunnyview is proud to provide individualized outpatient therapy services at six Capital Region locations, including its newest location at Hudson



Valley Plaza in Troy. At each of our outpatient centers, you can expect the same individualized expert care that has made Sunnyview a leader in rehabilitation services. Our up-to-the-minute treatment techniques, combined with state-of-the-art technology, assure that you, or your loved one, receive the best care possible.

Adrienne Fil, MS, PT; Edward Eisenman, CEO; Lynne Nicolson, MD, medical director; Lisa Kurtelawicz, PTH; Susan Paurowski, PT, DPT; and Lou Fasolino, OTR/L, manager of outpatient rehabilitation, attend the open house for Sunnyview's newest outpatient therapy location at Hudson Valley Plaza in Troy.

Sunnyview Outpatient Therapy Services:

Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital
1270 Belmont Ave., Schenectady, NY
(518) 382-4500

Sunnyview Therapy Services – Carman Road
Carman Medical Arts Building
3757 Carman Rd., Schenectady, NY
(518) 356-3139

Sunnyview Therapy Services – Hudson Valley Plaza
Hudson Valley Plaza
75 Vandenburg Ave., Troy, NY
(518) 270-3041

Sunnyview Therapy Services – Latham Farms
Latham Farms
579 Troy-Schenectady Rd., Latham, NY
(518) 382-4593

Sunnyview Therapy Services – Socha Plaza
Socha Plaza
115 Saratoga Rd., Glenville, NY
(518) 386-3579

Sunnyview Therapy Services – Western Avenue
1450 Western Ave., Albany, NY
(518) 525-5588

You Can Make a Direct Impact on the Work at Sunnyview!

Each year, Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital identifies critical needs that will help fulfill our commitment to improving the lives of our patients and their families. These investments in care are important, but can strain our not-for-profit budget. The Sunnyview Foundation is committed to fulfilling these needs through the generosity of grateful patients, their families, and generous donors like you. Here are just some of the ways you can help.

Make Some Waves in our Therapy Pool **Any Dollar Amount**

The Golub Pool for dedicated aquatic therapy with its movable floor is the only one of its kind in central and northern upstate NY. The mechanics for moving the floor and maintaining the consistent 92 degree water temperature require regular maintenance and upgrades of \$10,000 – \$15,000 per year. Every gift keeps our clients buoyant and moving underwater.

Keep the Wellness Center Fit **\$500 - \$10,000 (\$25,000 total)**

With 1,200 community members and additional use from many patients, the Lifestyle Wellness Center keeps many people healthy and active. Help us keep our clients moving with new and upgraded equipment.



Bring Patients Some Fresh Air Comfort **\$250 - \$1,500 (\$15,000 total)**

Patients, families, staff, and volunteers have found the courtyard at our café a refreshing respite from the busy hospital. We are upgrading the outdoor furniture for the first time to increase comfort and accommodate multi-sized patient mobility devices. Come visit our beautiful outdoor oasis!

Invest in a 90th Anniversary Gift **Any Dollar Amount**

In 2018, Sunnyview celebrates 90 years of improving rehabilitative medicine for our region. With advances in medicine and technology, and with the support of philanthropy, Sunnyview now provides care through six specialty centers of excellence in stroke, musculoskeletal, brain injury, spinal cord injury, cardiac, and pulmonary care. Your support keeps Sunnyview at the forefront of care.

Expand Sunnyview's Reach **\$500 - \$10,000 (\$150,000 total)**

Sunnyview Outpatient Therapy Services continues to expand our scope of care beyond Schenectady, with locations in Albany, Latham, Guilderland, Glenville, and now Troy. Your gift can help us improve or upgrade therapy equipment and furniture in an office near you.

Train a Therapist or Nurse **\$700 - \$1,500 (\$30,000 total)**

Continuing advances in care and new technologies adopted at Sunnyview require continuous training and upgrading of skills. Put your resources toward advancing the skills of one of our talented clinicians. Your investment will impact patients for a lifetime.

Make Each Night's Sleep Safer **\$1,000 - \$8,000 (\$80,000 total)**

Sunnyview is investing in lower beds to allow restraint-free sleep on our brain injury unit and other nursing units. These beds lower to seven inches from the floor at night to prevent unnecessary falls, replacing older high beds that require safety restraints. It is a safer and sounder night's sleep!

Recognize Great Caregivers **\$1,000 - \$10,000 (\$80,000 total)**

Patients and families regularly comment on the quality of our therapists and their sincere care. Sunnyview is recognizing our most advanced and talented therapists through our Clinical Ladder program. You can name an Advanced Senior Clinician or a Clinical Scholar with your gift.

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Sunnyview's Ventilator Weaning Program

Helping Patients Breathe Again

Mechanical ventilation is a life-sustaining intervention for individuals unable to breathe on their own due to a serious illness or injury such as respiratory failure, traumatic brain injury, stroke, spinal cord injury, or other medical condition. In some instances, a ventilator can assist the patient in breathing normally, and in other cases, it may perform the task completely so that the patient can rest and recover. While a ventilator does not cure an illness, it sustains life until the patient is able to breathe on his or her own.

Usually a patient is on a ventilator for only a short period of time, however, there are times when one is needed for weeks or months. In such cases, it may be necessary for the patient to be weaned off the ventilator gradually.

Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital is proud to offer a highly successful ventilator weaning program, one of only a few programs in the country that provides vent weaning, medical management and intensive therapy in the acute hospital setting. The skilled team is trained in the most recent techniques and research. Led by critical care physicians, nurse practitioners and a physiatrist, the team includes certified rehabilitation nurses (CCRN); respiratory, physical, occupational and speech therapists; neuropsychologists; social workers; care managers; recreational therapists; and dietitians.



*Ron and Anne Walczak
of Bennington, VT.*

"In 2017, 73 patients were admitted to Sunnyview's ventilator weaning program with an average length of stay of 27 days," stated Nancy Smith, RN, program manager. "This compares very favorably with other inpatient programs in the nation and region. What's more, 82 percent of patients were able to come off the ventilator."

One of them was Ronald Walczak of Bennington, VT.

In September, 2017, Ron was recuperating from chest surgery for fractured ribs after a fall when he suddenly began feeling weak and was having difficulty breathing. Rushed to Samaritan Hospital in Troy, he was soon diagnosed with Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS), a rare neurological disorder in which the body's immune system mistakenly attacks part of its peripheral nervous system — the network of nerves located outside of the brain and spinal cord.

While GBS can range from a very mild case with brief weakness, it can also

lead to nearly devastating paralysis, leaving the person unable to breathe independently.

This, unfortunately, was the case with Ron. In early October, he was transferred to Sunnyview completely paralyzed, with a ventilator and feeding tube keeping him alive. He was unable to move or communicate.

Ron spent almost two months at Sunnyview, working with the entire team of rehabilitation specialists and slowly regaining his mobility and function. Most importantly, with the help of the interdisciplinary team, he was gradually weaned off the ventilator.

Ron especially remembers working with Petros Pravasilis, MS, CCC-SLP, the speech/language pathologist who played an important role in the weaning process by helping Ron communicate and learn how to swallow again.

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Research Projects at Sunnyview



Research projects recently completed include:

- **Improving Patient Safety**
Michele Cournan, DNP, RN, CRRN, Benjamin Fusco-Gessick, MA, and Laura Wright, RN, CRRN.
A 2016 study published in the *Journal of Rehabilitation Nursing* showed how Sunnyview's use of a video monitoring system improved patient safety by decreasing falls.
- **Pediatric Brain Injury**
Vincent Somaio, MD and Benjamin Fusco-Gessick, MA.
A 2018 study presented at the North American Brain Injury Society Conference examined how the level of consciousness at admission predicted differences in community discharge rates.
- **Rehabilitation and the Elderly**
Paul Novak, MS, OTR, Nancy Smith, RN, and Benjamin Fusco-Gessick, MA. A 2016 study presented at the American Medical Rehabilitation Providers Association conference and American Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation showed that age is not a predictor of a patient's ability to benefit from acute rehabilitation and that a small number of discrete functional abilities predicted discharge destination.

- **Coordinated Hearing Care**
Margaret Halinski, MM, AuD.
A 2017 case study presented at the American Academy of Audiology Conference showed how coordinated care between audiology and ear, nose and throat physicians resulted in the resolution of mixed hearing loss.

Ongoing research at Sunnyview includes studies examining:

- **The impact of medical literacy on medication management**
(Gillen, Fusco-Gessick)
- **The use of an augmentative communication system for patients with tracheostomies**
(Castellina, Pravasilis, Labarge)
- **Methods of assessing and treating unilateral spatial neglect in stroke patients** (Gillen, Fusco-Gessick)
- **The effectiveness of body-weight-supported treadmill training for TBI patients** (McCarroll, Valenza, Provost, Maloney, Lenge)

Research at Sunnyview is supported by the National Institute on Disability Research and Rehabilitation, the New York State Department of Transportation, and the charitable contributions of the Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital Foundation.

For an expanded list of completed and ongoing research conducted at Sunnyview, please visit www.sphv.com/research-and-publications-svh.

In order to advance the state of the science and provide patients with the highest quality evidence-based care, Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital remains committed to original research aimed at developing innovative treatments across a broad range of disciplines.

At Sunnyview, research is a fundamental part of the hospital's culture. Its clinical ladder program, designed to reward individual therapists who have displayed extraordinary efforts beyond their daily routine, requires participation in nationally recognized clinical research studies as a prerequisite for consideration. Additionally, new staff members are encouraged to participate in research projects under the direction of senior principal investigators.

Lower Your Taxes with the New Tax Law

For smart taxpayers, the new law provides easy opportunities to lower taxes even more.

Congress doubled the standard deduction to: \$12,000 for single filers and \$24,000 for married filers.

Whether you typically itemize or take the standard deduction, there are some strategies you can use to receive new tax savings as well as other non-tax benefits.

Call or email us to learn how you can use the new law to its fullest advantage.

This information is not intended as tax, legal or financial advice. Gift results may vary. Consult your personal financial advisor for information specific to your situation.

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The most significant opportunity for you is probably the standard deduction.

It can be used instead of itemizing your deductions, where in the past you might have claimed a deduction for mortgage interest, state and local taxes and charitable giving.

Fund a charitable gift annuity or charitable remainder unitrust

Either strategy provides you with annual income, a charitable income tax deduction and potentially favorable capital gains treatment while allowing you to support Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital. Your specific benefits will be affected based on whether you itemize or take the standard deduction.

Make an outright gift of an appreciated asset to charity

This strategy allows you to support Sunnyview while generating a charitable tax deduction and potentially capital gains tax savings. This strategy provides tax benefits to itemizers and non-itemizers.

Give from your pre-tax assets by making an IRA rollover gift

If you are 70½ or older, this strategy allows you to give up to \$100,000 directly from your IRA rather than take the required distribution from your IRA. This strategy does not result in a charitable deduction but will help you avoid tax on the distribution. This strategy works for both itemizers and non-itemizers.

For more information, please email Michael.D.OHara@sphp.com or Kathleen.Ziobrowski@sphp.com, or call (518) 482-4433. Visit legacy.givetosunnyview.org

Carlilian Wheelchair Challenge Update

Sunnyview supporters gave generously in response to the \$20,000 Carlilian Foundation challenge grant for the Sunnyview wheelchair fleet announced in the spring. The challenge exceeded the goal with more than \$30,000 in matching donor gifts to purchase 84 new wheelchairs. You can spot the new wheelchairs at the hospital with the Carlilian Foundation logo and donor recognition tagged on the side. Our thanks to all who contributed!

You Can Make a Direct Impact on the Work at Sunyview!

Continued from page 6

Sponsor a Patient in Need Any Dollar Amount (up to \$50,000 annually)

Many Sunnyview patients don't have the income or the insurance to cover some of their therapies. Each year, Sunnyview makes up the difference to continue their care through outpatient services in Cardiopulmonary Services, Post-Stroke Group, Visual Arts Program and Recreation Therapy. The Patient Needs Fund has a direct impact on our patients' well-being.

Contribute Where Your Gift is Needed Most Any Dollar Amount

Each year, there are unforeseen needs that require immediate investment – technology upgrades, mandated safety equipment, or repairs to critical therapy technology. You can contribute whatever meets your budget, to help support our great patient care.

THANK YOU!

Sunnyview's Ventilator Weaning Program

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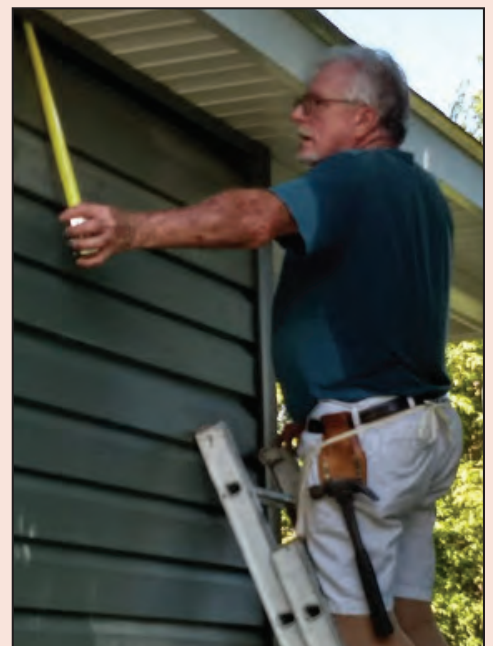
"We performed a videofluoroscopic swallowing study to assess his swallow function and determine an appropriate course of treatment to help Ron get back to eating and drinking. As part of our therapy we also utilized a number of techniques and devices, including the Passy-Muir speaking valve which attaches to the outside opening of the tracheostomy tube to restore Ron's speech and improve his ability to communicate."

Ron and his wife also credit the very supportive rehabilitation nurses and nurse practitioners for their care and

compassion throughout a very difficult process.

"Everyone at Sunnyview was so professional, helping me deal with the tremendous anxiety I was feeling as I practiced swallowing and breathing on my own." noted Ron. "When they finally took the trach tube out, it was so great to be able to talk and hear my own voice again!"

For more information on Sunnyview's ventilator weaning program, call (518) 382-4500.



Ron Walczak is back to doing the things he enjoys.