

WELCOME NEW RESIDENTS

Sunnyview's new
residency program | 4

SUNNYVIEW'S LEGACY CIRCLE

Ensuring our future | 5

MAKE AN IMPACT

Help fund an area
of need | 6

Rehabilitation **INSIGHT**

A publication of Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital

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Ray Otten's Journey to Independence

Long-time Ballston Spa resident, Ray Otten, is a man who enjoys life.

The 66-year-old loves his job as executive director of the Community Emergency Corps in Ballston Spa, a position he's held for 14 years after serving 22 as a volunteer EMT.

A bass guitarist, Ray gets a kick out of jamming with high school pals, playing oldies from the 1960s and '70s.

Most of all, Ray enjoys his family — Millie, his wife of 41 years, his two children, and his four grandsons who he sees every day.

Yet, not too long ago, Ray was faced with the very real possibility of losing it all.

In 2016, Ray was diagnosed with spinal stenosis, a narrowing of the spaces within the spine that puts pressure on the nerves. The condition causes severe back pain and can worsen over time. His doctor recommended surgery.

(continued on page 3)



 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

As we enter a new year and all it promises, I cannot help but look back on 2019 and be reminded of the profound impact Sunnyview has on so many patients throughout the year.

Recently, I received a letter from a gentleman who had experienced multiple strokes during July and August and was in St. Peter's Hospital for 10 days. Here's what he had to say:

"From there (the hospital), I was sent to Sunnyview for 27 days. I would have taken the wrong path if not for the positive reinforcement I received from family, friends and a group of men and women who work at Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital, 2nd floor west wing, who guided me on my path to recovery.

As a kid, we have all had heroes: fathers, brothers, mothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, firefighters, police officers, ballplayers ... For me, at 63-years-old, I have a group of men and women who I consider my heroes. These are the nurses, caregivers and doctors who I would like to acknowledge ..."

This grateful patient went on to name 15 staff members who cared for him during his stay — nurses, therapists, and others who "gave me praise when I was feeling down," or "talked me through some tough times early on in my journey ..."

As CEO of Sunnyview, I have the privilege of working with these very same heroes every day of the year. For that I am deeply grateful. I am also grateful to the many individual and corporate donors who generously support us throughout the year. You, too, are heroes.

As always, thank you for all that you do. Happy New Year!



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!

Ray Otten "jamming" with friends.



Ray Otten and his family.



Ray Otten's Journey

Continued from page 1

There was one catch. At 6'3", Ray weighed 460 pounds. His surgeon said back surgery was out of the question until he reached a healthy weight.

Ray underwent bariatric surgery and eventually lost 200 pounds. In March 2018, he had his long-awaited back surgery.

"Immediately after surgery, I noticed I had no sensation from the waist down. I couldn't move on my own at all. The staff used a hoist to transfer me from the wheelchair to the bed," he recalled.

After a month in rehab in Amsterdam with no improvement, it was apparent that something was wrong. A CT scan showed that, above the four vertebrae that had been fused, a fifth vertebra was broken.

After a second back surgery in May, Ray insisted on Sunnyview for his post-op rehabilitation. With decades of experience in emergency medical services, he was familiar with Sunnyview's reputation. He also had worked there during high school. He knew it was where he needed to be. Upon admission, Ray could not stand, had no ability to move his legs, had

very little or no bowel or bladder control, and was confined to his bed or a wheelchair.

"I required 100 percent assistance," stated Ray, who at times was discouraged. However, in addition to his family, he credits the staff for giving him hope.

"Right from the first day, I knew I was in good hands. They kept me informed and encouraged me to work hard. My motto was 'adapt and overcome.'"

With three hours of intensive therapy each day, Ray slowly began to improve. He remembers the first time he was upright at a "standing table" and recalls doing strengthening exercises with his inpatient physical therapist, Karah Lenge, as well as working with his occupational therapist, Casey Cowan, on activities of daily living (ADLs).

At the end of June, Ray went home. Though still confined to a wheelchair he was able to stand with a walker, take a few steps, and do standing pivot transfers. However, he was still unable to climb stairs and needed a lift installed at the front entrance.

For the next year, Ray traveled to Sunnyview for outpatient therapy with Cassandra Berghammer, DPT, who

recalls that Ray's lower extremities were extremely weak which resulted in significant decline in functioning.

"Ray was very dependent on the assistance of others to perform most daily tasks," said Cassandra.

"While his wheelchair allowed him to be somewhat independent with locomotion, he was totally dependent for transportation."

As he gradually regained standing and walking abilities, Ray's therapy focused on strengthening; standing balance; endurance and gait/mobility training. This was accomplished by using Sunnyview's therapeutic pool; the Lite Gait body weight support system, and RT300/Xcite functional electrical stimulation technologies.

Cassandra stated, "There is never a clear prognosis after such an extensive injury and in Ray's case, no guarantee that he would ever functionally walk again. Yet, we took it day by day, setting small, realistic goals and then celebrating all the little gains he made."

While his progress was slow, he continued to show significant improvements which Cassandra attributes to his positive attitude and outlook.

(continued on page 4)

Sunnyview Partners with AMC Residency Program

In September, Sunnyview welcomed two new psychiatry residents as part of an expanded affiliation with the Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R) residency program at Albany Medical College (AMC). Yaser Albataineh, MD, and Kelsey Albert, DO, will complete all their inpatient training at Sunnyview and will have specific learning objectives designed to meet their training requirements as they pursue board certification.

According to Lynne T. Nicolson, M.D., Chief Medical Officer, "As the tertiary rehabilitation hospital in the region, Sunnyview is committed to education of professionals in all related health care fields. We have affiliations with a large number of nursing and therapy schools and have always had a relationship with AMC. However, we believe that it is mutually beneficial for the regional trauma center to formally partner with the regional inpatient rehabilitation facility to optimize the training experience for PM&R residents."

Dr. Nicolson noted that Sunnyview psychiatrist, Matthew B. Sonagere, DO, serves as liaison to the AMC residency program and has significantly strengthened Sunnyview's relationships with the PM&R faculty at the medical college.

Sunnyview has much to offer PM&R residents. As the only freestanding acute inpatient rehabilitation hospital in the region, Sunnyview cares for



L to r: Matthew B. Sonagere, DO; Kelsey Albert, DO; Yaser Albataineh, MD; and Lynne T. Nicolson, MD.

patients who are medically complex due to serious injuries: traumatic brain injury, spinal cord injury, stroke, heart and respiratory failure. The partnership offers residents extensive opportunities for patient management, as well as increased exposure to state-of-the-art rehabilitation technology, such as the robotic exoskeleton, Xcite and InMotion Robot. In addition, residents

will participate in and support research projects conducted at Sunnyview.

"At the same time, we expect several positive impacts on patient care, including continued improvement in our already high patient satisfaction scores, further gains in clinical outcomes and quality of care,

as residents will be required to develop and implement a quality improvement project as part of their curriculum," stated Dr. Sonagere.

Both physicians agree there are many additional benefits that resident training will provide, such as increasing provider satisfaction which could ultimately lead to increased retention and greater ease in physician recruitment.

Ray Otten's Journey

Continued from page 3

Today, Ray can stand up from a sitting position, get in and out of bed on his own, and is able to walk at home with just a straight cane! He can negotiate stairs — no more sleeping downstairs in a hospital bed — and is independent with all his daily activities.

When out and about, Ray uses forearm crutches for walking and only uses his wheelchair for long distances. He continues to maintain a much healthier lifestyle than before,

eating better and exercising regularly which has helped in his recovery.

Ray is driving again and able to get his wheelchair in and out of the car on his own. He said, "My first 'alone drive' was exhilarating!"

"Ray was willing to put in all the work needed to regain his independence. Without his level of motivation, he would never be where he is today. I was blown away by the progress he made," Cassandra added.

Sunnyview's Clinical Ladder Recipients

Each year Sunnyview's Clinical Ladder program recognizes and rewards the dedicated therapists who display extraordinary efforts beyond their daily routine. Those recognized achieve a new title and a monetary stipend. Sunnyview's clinicians with at least four years of experience in acute rehabilitation are eligible to apply and must display the following attributes: exceptional dedication to Sunnyview's mission; advanced clinical competencies; superior mentoring/educational abilities; and participation in nationally recognized clinical research. The Sunnyview Hospital Foundation board feels this program is so important to Patient Care and staff quality that they provide significant resources to support the program each year. Congratulations to this year's recipients!



Back row: Donna Stressel, OTR, CDI, CDRS; Caroline Swayne, AVD, CCC-A; Jonathan Brendese, MS, CCC-SLP; Amy Comley PT-DPT; and Sarah Henderson, MS, OTR/L. Front row: Erica Gauthier, PT, DPT, NCS; Sharon Watkins-Fox, MC, CCC-SLP; Kerri Maloney, Cono Cirone, PT, DPT, NCS; and Jessica Goyette, MS, OTR/L

Not pictured: Emmie Houghton, MS, CCC-SLP; Allison Tallon, PT,DPT; Ali Chamberlin, OTR/L, CSRS; Jennifer Higgins, MOT, OTR/L; Rachel Kimball, PT,DPT; Tiana Pendelton, MA, CCC-SLP; Carrie Mallison, DPT, MSCS; Casey Cowen, MS OTR/L; Dana Grady (Luthe), MS, OTR/L; Lori Reichel, OTR/L,CLT-LAWA; Sharon Marion, PT-DPT; and Karah Lenge, PT, DPT

Continuing a Legacy of Generosity



Elaine Springsted of Niskayuna was a longtime friend of Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital, having served countless years as a dedicated member of its Auxiliary.

The Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital Auxiliary was established in 1933 to support Sunnyview in its mission of helping children with disabilities. At that time, the Auxiliary provided funds for various hospital projects and the purchase of new equipment. It also financially supported entertainment for the children who lived and schooled at the hospital.

Today, the Auxiliary remains committed to its mission continuing to raise funds for vital hospital projects and the purchase of clinically advanced technology. Through the Patient Needs Scholarship Fund, the Auxiliary additionally assists patients who need help paying for needed critical services. Through the years, Elaine Springsted carried out Sunnyview Auxiliary's mission by helping in Sunnyview's Sheppard Gift Shop and serving as Auxiliary treasurer. She also played an instrumental role in organizing the Auxiliary's annual Fall Fashion Show. Sadly, Elaine passed away on August 25, 2019, but her legacy of generosity lives on. Elaine was a member of

Sunnyview's Legacy Circle, a special recognition society for individuals who have made a gift to Sunnyview through their estate plan. Her gift will help ensure that Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital can continue providing nationally recognized rehabilitation services long into the future. We are thankful for all the years of service Elaine provided as well as for her kind generosity.

If you would like more information on how to be a part of The Legacy Circle, or if you have already made a gift to us through your estate, please contact Kathie Ziobrowski, Director of Legacy Giving at (518) 525-1529, or email her at Kathleen.Ziobrowski@sphp.com.

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.

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

With 1,200 members and additional use from many patients, the Lifestyle Wellness Center and Golub Therapy Pool keep many people healthy and active. Recumbent bikes and treadmills wear out with tens of thousands of miles on them. Help us keep our clients moving with new and upgraded equipment.

Provide Everyone Some Fresh Air Comfort **\$250 - \$5,000 (\$30,000 in total)**

Patients, families, staff, and volunteers have found the courtyard at our café a refreshing oasis outside the busy hospital. We are upgrading the outdoor furniture and lighting to accommodate guests throughout the day and into the evening. Come visit our beautiful outdoor patio!

Invest in Sunnyview's Outpatient Offices **\$100 - \$15,000 (\$15,000 in total)**

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

Support Some Easy Riding **\$500 - \$7,000 (\$21,000 in total)**

Riding a recumbent bike is one of the easiest ways to get back into exercising and achieving greater success in the gym. Sunnyview is adding and upgrading three bikes in our gyms to keep patients moving in the right direction for better fitness.

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

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



Provide New Skills for a Therapist or Nurse **\$100 - \$3,500 (\$30,000 in 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 patient care for a lifetime.

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

Many Sunnyview patients do not have the insurance or the resources to cover some of their therapies. Each year, Sunnyview makes up the difference to continue their care through outpatient services in the Wellness Center, Post-Stroke Group, Studio Arts Program, and Recreation Therapy. The Patient Needs Scholarship Fund directly impacts our patients' continued well-being.

Direct Resources Where They Are Needed Most **\$25 - \$25,000**

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 amount meets your budget, to help support our great patient care.

Thank you!

Day at the Races ... a Galloping Success!

Sunnyview's annual Day at the Races was held on July 24, at Saratoga Race Course's newest venue, the 1863 Club. Thank you to the more than 160 attendees who joined us for a most enjoyable afternoon. We extend a special thank you to our sponsors for their generosity.



2019 Day at the Races Sponsors

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- Northeastern Fine Jewelry

Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital Named “Enterprise of the Year” by The Chamber of Schenectady County

Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital was named the recipient of the 2019 Enterprise of the Year Award from the Chamber of Schenectady County.

The award was presented on October 23, at the chamber’s 31st Annual Business Awards at the Glen Sanders Mansion in Scotia.

Sunnyview was honored for its positive contributions to the region through positive patient outcomes and clinical excellence, “while at the same time having a positive effect on the economic development in our community and the quality of life of its residents,” according to the chamber.

The Chamber graciously created a video in recognition of this year’s award recipients. We invite you to view our video at expertsinrehab.com.

CEO, Chip Eisenman accepting the award from Chamber Awards Chair, Jeanne Maloy.



L to r: From Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital, Michael O'Hara, Executive Director, Foundation; Bob Bylansik, former CEO; Lynne Nicolson, MD, CMO; Chip Eisenman, CEO; James Nolan, PhD, Foundation Board Chair; Carolyn Montorio, former Auxiliary President; Loretta Moore, Auxiliary President; Brittany Blond, Annual Giving Specialist; and Mike Komazenski, Schenectady Assistant Fire Chief