

Bionic Exoskeleton Helps Sunnyview Patients Walk Again

In May 2016, Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital acquired new, advanced technology that provides hope and help to patients who thought they would never walk or even stand again. The EksoGT™, developed by Ekso Bionics (EKSO), is a state-of-the-art, wearable robotic “gait trainer” exoskeleton that allows patients who have had a disabling injury or illness, such as a stroke or spinal cord injury, to actually stand up and walk.

Originally developed for use in military and industrial settings, robotic exoskeletons have become increasingly useful in the field of rehabilitation. During 2016, the EksoGT became the first robotic exoskeleton to receive clearance from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in the treatment of individuals with hemiplegia due to stroke (paralysis of one side of the body), as well as those with spinal cord injury levels to the C7 vertebrae.

In just the first few months at Sunnyview, the EksoGT has already been used by nearly two dozen inpatients and outpatients with stroke, spinal cord injury, and brain injury.

Sixty-two-year-old Wayne Cole of Tribes Hill, NY, is one of them. On July 21, 2016, Wayne suffered a stroke causing paralysis to his left side. After four days in Albany Medical Center Hospital, Wayne was transferred to Sunnyview where he spent the next five weeks as an inpatient, regaining his independence, including re-learning how to walk.

“The Ekso has made such a difference ... not only does it help me with balance and



Allison Poetzsch, PT, DPT, and Greg Scepi.

confidence, it actually helps retrain my brain to walk correctly. With the Ekso, I can’t re-learn to walk the wrong way, it forces me to do it the right way,” noted Wayne.

Allison Poetzsch, PT, DPT, Wayne’s outpatient physical therapist explained, “The Ekso supports correct posture and balance, and provides adjustable amounts of power to either side of the body ensuring that patients are ‘equal’ on both sides. As a result, patients like Wayne can take more ‘quality’ steps with less energy and get in more walking time during therapy sessions. This makes a tremendous difference on the journey to recovery.”

Allison is one of four physical therapists at Sunnyview who participated in the four-day

introductory training session in June, as well as advanced training in September.

At the time of his discharge on August 31, Wayne was still using a wheelchair. He continues outpatient therapy at Sunnyview – including once a week with the Ekso – and today is walking on his own with the help of a cane. He credits the Ekso for his progress and declared, “It’s just fabulous technology. I am so glad and fortunate that Sunnyview had the Ekso. I hope that someday, every rehab facility has one.”

Greg Scepi, 40, of Albany, agrees. In 2015 Greg traveled to Boston for complicated surgery to repair a congenital defect in his spinal cord. While the surgery was a success, it resulted in partial paralysis to his legs and confined him to a wheelchair.

After a stay in a rehabilitation facility in the Boston area, he returned to his native Capital Region and eventually found Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital for outpatient therapy. While Greg has fairly typical movement in his left leg, just

weakness, his right leg has almost no movement. When the Ekso was acquired, staff determined that Greg fit the criteria. He served as a volunteer during the initial training and has been working with the Ekso once each week ever since.

“It’s the next best thing to walking on my own!” said Greg.

In fact, Greg noted that a major goal for him has been to be able to walk up steps. “The Ekso has helped me activate muscles

Continued on page 7

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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.

 **Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital**

ST PETER'S HEALTH PARTNERS

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!

Welcome

Gratitude – it envelops us in so many ways – given, shared, felt. In this issue of Insight, you will find many examples of shared gratitude from Sunnyview patients and families, our caring and talented staff, our volunteers, business vendors, and the greater community we serve.

Our largest example of gratitude is the 150 member Sunnyview Auxiliary which voluntarily raises money for our hospital's special projects, equipment, and our Patient Needs Scholarship Fund to assist patients in need. Last June, I had the pleasure of publicly thanking the Auxiliary and its leaders, Carolyn Montorio and Loretta Moore, for their tireless service and generous gifts. In just the last five years, Auxiliary donations topped \$250,000. In addition, Auxiliary members contribute even more through individual donations. The difference they make for our patients, families, and staff is immeasurable.

A dramatic story of gratitude is that of Nan and Hugh Murphy whose magnanimous gift brought the EksoGT exoskeleton to Sunnyview. In just a few short months, we have had patient after patient tell us what a huge impact this therapeutic device is making in their lives. It is allowing individuals to once again stand and take steps after that ability has been taken away, improving emotional well-being and renewing physical strength.

We recognize that recovery doesn't happen without our talented therapists and clinicians; that's why we are so pleased the Sunnyview Foundation Board has committed to raise funds to support our Clinical Ladder Program which rewards staff who regularly display extraordinary care and expertise, above and beyond their daily duties.

Gifts large and small go a long way at Sunnyview and are invested wisely in our equipment and our staff. In this issue you will read about how our video monitoring system is helping us develop a successful falls prevention program, once again illustrating how the combination of technology, training, and safety is making a real difference for our patients.

Please enjoy our stories and photos of gratitude. Thank you for your support.



Chip Eisenman
Chief Executive Officer



Auxiliary leaders: Loretta Moore and Carolyn

Sunnyview Recognized for Successful Falls Reduction Program

In 2016, Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital was one of three health care organizations nationwide to receive an award from AvaSure, the maker and distributor of the AvaSys video monitoring system now in use in hundreds of hospitals across the country. Sunnyview was the proud recipient of the Path to Zero Award for the most impressive falls reduction program centered on video monitoring.

Falls are a serious quality issue for all health care facilities. Each year, between 700,000 and one million patients fall while in the hospital, according to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

The problem is especially true in rehabilitation facilities. Patients are encouraged to be as independent as possible, yet are told not to do any activity without assistance when in their rooms. This mixed message, combined with cognitive impairment, oftentimes leads to an increased risk for falls.

In September 2014, Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital began using AvaSys, a remote patient observation and communications system that enables both visual and audio monitoring of patients. With AvaSys, a technician can observe patients using one of Sunnyview's portable or permanently installed monitors in patient rooms. The monitors allow technicians to see unsafe behaviors before the patient attempts to get out of the bed or chair and provides the ability to directly communicate with him or her. And, the system has STAT alarm capabilities for instances that require emergency notification of the caregivers on the unit.

To protect the privacy of the patient, monitors do not record patient activity and privacy can be requested by clinicians when providing direct patient care.



L to r: Nancy Peterson, RN-BC, BS, CRRN, LisBeth Votruba, VP for Clinical Quality and Innovation at Ava-Sure, MSN, RN, Michele Courman, DNP, RN, CRRN FNP, ANP-BC, Susan VanWie, RN-CRRN, Laura Wright, RN, CRRN PALS, and Jody Henry, RN, CRRN, ACLS, PALS.

Upon implementation, Sunnyview focused on its brain injury unit, a patient population that tends to have a higher risk for falls. In the first 11 months, the rate of falls in that unit decreased by nearly 29 percent after the use of AvaSys monitors.

Since then, Sunnyview has installed additional monitors throughout the hospital for a total of 30 and has seen a dramatic decrease of 31 percent in the overall falls rate hospital-wide.

“Patient safety is always our number one priority; we are delighted with the positive results we have seen with this new technology,” noted Michele Courman, DNP, manager of risk and quality improvement at Sunnyview.

However, she explained that AvaSys monitoring has many additional benefits. “Video monitoring reduces the costs associated with the use of one-on-one sitters, as well as provides increased patient satisfaction. In addition, families state that they can relax knowing that their family member is being monitored.”

Help change the lives of future generations!

“The seeds of kindness you plant today will one day bloom in the hearts of all you touch.”

Perhaps you, a loved one or friend have had a personal and positive experience with Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital. Or, maybe you simply desire to give back to the community. By leaving a legacy gift, you can help Sunnyview purchase state-of-the-art equipment and expand vital programs and services so we can provide much-needed help and hope to so many in our community.

You can make an impact in far-reaching ways by including the Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital Foundation in your estate

plans (Tax ID 22-2505127). The simplest way to make a significant difference is by leaving a bequest in your will. You can indicate a specific dollar amount or a percentage of your estate. And, your estate will benefit from a tax-deductible charitable bequest.

Start today by contacting your financial advisor or attorney for help in establishing your lasting legacy. For a confidential discussion, please contact Kathie Ziobrowski, director of legacy giving, at (518) 525-1529, or email her at Kathleen.Ziobrowski@sphp.com.

Clinical Ladder Established for Sunnyview Therapists

Many would agree that Sunnyview's clinical staff is its greatest resource. The compassion, expertise and experience of our staff truly make possible the miracles that happen here every day. In order to recognize, reward and retain these dedicated professionals, as well as recruit additional ones, Sunnyview recently developed a new Clinical Ladder program.

The Clinical Ladder Program is designed to reward individual therapists who have displayed extraordinary efforts beyond their daily routine. Successful candidates achieve a new title, either Advanced Senior Clinician or Clinical Scholar depending on the strength of their professional portfolio, as well as a monetary stipend. Clinicians are required to maintain the same level of excellence and must reapply, at designated intervals, to continue their status and stipend.

Sunnyview clinicians with at least four years of experience in acute rehabilitation are eligible to apply and must consistently

display the following attributes: Exceptional dedication to Sunnyview's mission; advanced clinical competencies; superior mentoring/educational abilities; and participation in nationally recognized clinical research.

In the first year of the program, Sunnyview was pleased to award 12 therapists with the title of Advanced Senior Clinician, and one with the title of Clinical Scholar.

Congratulations to these clinicians who help Sunnyview provide a state-of-the-art, individualized and effective rehabilitation program that exceeds national benchmarks for patient satisfaction and fulfillment of patients' goals.

Individuals interested in supporting



L to r: Brittany Stevens, DPT; Nancy Smith, Program Manager, Cardio-Pulmonary and Orthopedics; Kerri Maloney, DPT; Donna Stressel, OTR; Paul Novak, Program Manager, Neuro-Rehabilitation Institute; Sandy Sassenbury, OTR; Cono Cirone, DPT; Louis Fasolino, Program Manager, Outpatient Therapy; Sarah Fine, OTR; Jessica Goyette, OTR; and Dacia Proper, DPT.

Not pictured: Brenda Breen, OTR; Rebecca Carson, OTR, CHT; Christine Damo, SLP; Emmie Houghton, SLP; Sharon Marion, DPT; and Lori Reichel, OTR.

Sunnyview's staff development and recognition through endowment of the Clinical Ladder Program are invited to contact the Foundation at (518) 382-4586.

Schenectady Fire Department 1 Boot Drive

On September 15, 2016, the Schenectady Fire Department 1 held a Boot Drive at the corner of Erie and State streets in downtown Schenectady. Proceeds from the drive, totaling \$5,000, went toward the Pediatric Program at Sunnyview.



Save the Date



Thursday, July 27, 2017

Saratoga Race Course

At The Rail Pavilion, Saratoga Springs

Gates open at 11:30 am

Tickets: \$150 per person

Honorary Committee: \$250 per person

2016 Events

Day at the Races

Sunnyview's Day at the Races was held on Friday, August 12, 2016, in the At the Rail Pavilion at the famed Saratoga Race Track. More than 125 individuals attended the annual event which raises funds to support programs that help improve the lives of patients at Sunnyview.

The highlight of this year's event was a demonstration of the Ekso wearable robotic "gait trainer" exoskeleton by Sunnyview patient Craig Lieberman. Craig, who previously suffered a stroke, is paralyzed from the waist down. He wowed both event attendees and others by walking through the pavilion wearing the Ekso, purchased entirely by the Foundation's generous donors Hugh and Nan Murphy. News 10 was on hand to capture Craig's fascinating demonstration.



Art for the View

On Friday, October 21, 2016, Sunnyview hosted the opening reception for Art for the View, an international exhibition for artists with disabilities first launched in 1999. This year's event featured 55 pieces of art created by 30 artists from as near as the Capital Region and as far away as Denmark and Canada.

The annual exhibition inspires, encourages and celebrates artists from around the world who were born with, or who have developed physical or cognitive disabilities.



Guests at the opening reception enjoyed a private preview of the winning collection, as well as live musical entertainment, an art sale and auction. In addition to cocktails, hors d'oeuvres and desserts, a beer tasting was provided by Wolf Hollow Brewing Company and wines were provided by Copaccia Winery.

Special thanks to our judges: Sandra Wilmer, artist in residence and senior lecturer of Printmaking & Design at Union College; Laini Nemett, professor of drawing and painting at Union College; and Connie Todt, director of studio art and lead recreational therapist at Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital.

Sunnyview's Viewpoint Gallery, featuring more than 100 works on permanent display throughout the hospital, is one of the largest art collections by artists with disabilities from around the world.

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You can make a direct impact on the work at Sunnyview!

Every year, Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital identifies critical needs and then addresses those needs to help improve the lives of our patients and their families. While these investments are important, they can strain our not-for-profit budget.

The Sunnyview Foundation is committed to providing the funds to meet those needs. That's why we turn to you, our grateful patients and families, our community members, and other generous donors to help us fulfill our mission of care.

Thank you!

Strengthen the Core **\$1,800 – \$5,000** **(\$65,000 total)**

Our 20-year-old Wellness Center needs to replace its original core fitness equipment which serves both our patients and our 1,400 Wellness Center members. You can touch so many individuals with a gift that will last another 20 years.

Reward a High Performer **\$6,000 – \$10,000** **(\$80,000 total)**

Did you know we have more than 140 therapists (PT, OT, OT, RT) at Sunnyview? We're proud to recognize and retain our most advanced therapists through the Clinical Ladder Program (more on page 4). Your gift can help us award the titles of Advanced Senior Clinician or Clinical Scholar to dedicated and skilled staff members.

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

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

Provide a Peaceful Outdoor Retreat **\$250 – \$1,500** **(\$15,000 total)**

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

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

Many Sunnyview patients do not have insurance or have inadequate insurance to cover their therapies. Each year, Sunnyview makes up the difference – up to \$50,000 – so that patients can continue their care through outpatient rehabilitation, the Post-Stroke Group, the Arts Program, and our Amputee Clinic. Sunnyview's Patient Needs Fund helps us do that and fulfill our important mission.

Help Patients Become Mobile **\$1,500 – \$8,000** **(\$100,000 total)**

Many patients need a lot of help to get back on their feet. Patient lifts and mattress movers offer safety to patients, and provide help to our nurses and therapists during a busy day of therapy. Help get our patients up and moving again with a contribution of needed lift and mobility equipment!

Stimulate Better Breathing **\$3,500 – \$9,000** **(\$35,000 total)**

Sunnyview's Ventilator Weaning Program is nationally recognized for its success rate in freeing longtime vent patients from their machines and allowing them to breathe on their own. The technology required is significant. This year, Sunnyview plans to acquire new equipment for muscle stimulation and strengthening to improve and accelerate outcomes. You can help patients breathe again!

Invest in a Nursing Manikin **\$2,500**

Wound care and prevention is another specialty at Sunnyview since many patients are restricted to their beds or chairs for much of the day. A medical training manikin will help our nurses and care technicians learn to turn, move and care for a "life-like" manikin with and without wounds.

Contribute to the Greatest Needs **Any amount**

Each year, unforeseen needs occur that require our immediate attention and investment of funds – technology upgrades, mandated safety equipment, repairs to critical therapy technology and others. Your contribution can help us respond and continue to provide state-of-the-art rehabilitation care to our patients.



In Memorium

Earlier this year, Sunnyview lost a dedicated physician and beloved friend – Dr. James Holmblad. Dr. Holmblad was a vital part of Sunnyview's medical staff for 66 years and a respected member of the Schenectady community. He will be greatly missed by many and forever remembered as an inspiration and pioneer of his time. Look for a more in-depth story on Dr. Holmblad's life in the next issue of Insight.

2016 Welcomed a New Sunnyview Foundation Staff

During 2016, Sunnyview welcomed an entire new staff to the Foundation office.

As introduced in the last newsletter, Michael O'Hara was hired in 2016 as the Foundation's new executive director. Mike brings 25 years of fundraising experience and a strong passion for people and health care.

Also new is Foundation development associate Brittany Blond. Before arriving at Sunnyview, Brittany worked at several hotels throughout the Capital Region, serving in various management positions and gaining valuable experience in sales administration

and customer service. She has quickly transitioned these skills to support Sunnyview's fundraising endeavors and is delighted that her efforts can now be used to impact people's lives.

Stevie Church joined Sunnyview Foundation as the new director of annual giving. Originally from the Capital Region, she previously served at Boston



L to r, Michael O'Hara, executive director; Brittany Blond, development associate; and Stevie Church, director of annual

Children's Hospital. Stevie's personal and career aspirations have always been to help facilitate relationships between those who have the desire and means to make an impact and those who need it most. She is delighted to have found a home at Sunnyview where everyday relationships like this prove to be the cause of life-changing results.

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Continued from page 1

and areas of my legs that I was unable to use before. Because of that, I actually have been able to go up a couple of stairs using leg braces. The first time I took those few steps up the stairs, I couldn't believe it ... I was ecstatic," he added.

Beyond the physical accomplishments, Greg credits the Ekso for his positive mental outlook. "When I was first in the wheelchair, I couldn't help but wonder what my life would be like – not being able to walk. Now, with this technology, I realize that anything

is possible ... there is hope. I feel so fortunate that I'm living in a time in history when technology can make such a difference."

Inspired Donors

During 2015, Sunnyview advocates Nan and Hugh Murphy were inspired by a patient demonstration of the hospital's ReWalk exoskeleton and offered to provide philanthropic support if and when Sunnyview needed to purchase another one.

In an effort to deliver the highest quality, evidence-based care, Sunnyview's Practice Innovations Committee consistently reviews and explores advanced rehab technologies that may be appropriate for patients, and then systematically assesses the new technology to ensure that limited capital expenditures are invested wisely. The assessment includes clinical results, safety, financial

considerations, and marketability.

Earlier this year, the committee recommended purchase of the new EksoGT, considered next-generation technology to the ReWalk, and a major step forward in robotic exoskeletons.

The Sunnyview Foundation approached the Murphys who reviewed the proposal.

"When we first learned about the Ekso Robotic Exoskeleton and all of the wonderful benefits that it could provide for patients, we felt it was ideal to enhance Sunnyview's already



L to r (back); Hugh Murphy, Jenn Murphy, and Nan Murphy. Front, Kim Zilm, patient.

superb rehabilitation services and facilities. Now, having observed the Ekso in use and hearing the feedback from patients and staff, we are delighted to find that it has exceeded our original expectations," Nan Murphy explains.

Thanks to their generous gift, the EksoGT was delivered in May 2016. Sunnyview anticipates

that over the course of the next year, 75 to 100 patients will benefit from this technology at Sunnyview.

Sunnyview Receives Generous Donations for Pediatric Project

Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital celebrated the holidays this year with several important and generous groups in the Schenectady community, including the Electric City Detachment Marine Corps League, the Schenectady Fire Department Station 1, Stewart's, and Radio 810-WGY.

Donations from these groups were directed to support the purchase of much-needed pediatric therapy equipment, including a ceiling swing, sand and water table, obstacle course equipment, crash mats, high-density foam rebound mats, three-step foam stairs, cubbies, and a therapy playground with a rock climbing wall, monkey bars and slide.

Sunnyview's pediatric program has grown significantly over the past few years. In 2016, the program cared for 1,376 pediatric

patients, an increase of 81 percent from 2015. In fact, since 2013, the program has seen an increase of 146 percent. The astounding growth has been made possible by a talented team of dedicated specialists, as well as the generosity of our donors.



Dacia Proper, DPT, assists Bella.

L to r: Mike Carhidi, Bob Stealey, Michael O'Hara, Sunnyview Rehabilitation Foundation executive director, Bob Becker, and Vito Cerone.