
◆ BrainWaves ◆

Volume 27 Issue 1

The Community Skills Program® Newsletter

Spring 2011

Once More With Feeling...Helpful

In our issues of *BrainWaves*, we include updates on our clients' (and sometimes our staff's) activities, to give you an idea of the variety of things they do on a regular basis. What we think is very impressive are the kinds of volunteer work in which they are involved. Also impressive is the number of people who continue to do volunteer work in addition to paid employment. Either independently or with family members, friends, or staff members, our clients are currently involved in the following volunteer activities: helping to prepare and serve meals for senior citizens who have lunch at a multi-service center; preparing and delivering Meals on Wheels; packaging "family boxes" of food items at a food pantry for homeless or low-income persons; packaging items for care packages to be shipped to our men and women in uniform overseas; baking bread for communion at church; handling kittens at a no-kill shelter; walking dogs at an animal rescue shelter; co-leading a crocheting class for persons with disabilities; conducting AA meetings for inmates at a local prison; performing transplanting tasks at a hydroponic gardening program; filing medical records at a local hospital; reading to pre-school children; serving on a city planning review board; and assisting nursing home residents with recreational activities.

The reasons for volunteering are many, and include getting used to working again after an injury or illness (so that returning to paid employment is successful), acquiring new work skills, trying out new kinds of work, filling in the gaps on a resume, having opportunities to interact with other people, having a place to go and feel productive, contributing to the community in

which you live, and *feeling helpful*. Being helpful—especially helping other people or animals, as many of our clients do—feels good.

There are numerous ways to get involved in volunteer activities. Talking to friends, neighbors, and relatives can help you to identify potential volunteer sites. There are some good online sources for volunteering, and you may want to google "volunteer work," and enter the city and state where you live. (If you do not have a computer, joining your local library may be a way to get access to one that you can use while you are there.) A favorite website of ours is [volunteer match.org](http://volunteermatch.org).

According to VolunteerMatch's website, there are currently over 77,000 participating organizations and over 60,000 active volunteering opportunities. There have reportedly been over five million referrals since 1998. To search for volunteer opportunities in your area, go to www.volunteermatch.org and type in your zip code, city, or state and keywords describing your area of interest (e.g., animals, food service).

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Update

- Welcome to our new clients—Abigail, Amanda, Antonio, Beatriz, Brian, Carmelena, Charles, Corina, Daniel, David, Fernando, Gregory, Lucy, Michael, Rees, Sharon, Tyler, Victoria, and Warren—and our new neurorehabilitation specialist—Marissa King, M.S.W.

Our clients and staff continue to be involved in many interesting, varied activities. As usual, in each issue we mention some of them; more will be mentioned in the next issue of *BrainWaves*.

- James has been volunteering at Leisure Park, calling bingo numbers for the residents.
- David is the proud owner of a new 2011 Hyundai Accent GS, thanks to good financial planning and his excellent credit rating.
- Deborah has been going to a sewing class, and accompanied her granddaughter to a sugaring festival. She also went on an overnight trip to the Poconos to visit a friend who is ill, and independently planned an eight-day trip to Florida in April to visit a friend.
- Curtis was offered employment at a franchise for Krispy Kreme donuts and is working there part-time, performing maintenance tasks. Congratulations!!
- Michael continues to volunteer at his church, attend a book club as part of the literacy program at the Jersey City Public Library, and exercise at the Forum Fitness Club twice a week.

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Update continued (from page 1)

- While Steve and Phill were out in the community recently, they participated in a brief, impromptu interview by a representative of the *Hopatcong Patch* who was polling residents about their preferences in music and what they listen to. Steve was quoted as saying he likes some jazz and classic rock, and named Miles Davis, Bob Dylan, and Joni Mitchell. Phill named The Clash, ELP, Pink Floyd, The Rolling Stones, The Beatles, and The Who. Their pictures were in the *Hopatcong Patch*, too.
- Bec passed the standard probationary period for new employees and requested an increase in her work hours as a store associate at Walmart. She also continues to volunteer at a multi-service center that provides meals for senior citizens, in a lovely dining room. Well done, Bec!
- Kirk has been working on a model of an 18th century sailing vessel to display at the 2011 *Creativity Expo*. [Please see page 7 for more details on the *Creativity Expo*, and make plans to attend! We're sure it will be spectacular.]
- Kathleen worked on a craft project for Easter; she created various types of decorative eggs to display in a basket in her home.
- Adam continues to work out at Body Zone twice a week, following an exercise program designed by his personal trainer. He also volunteers two days a week at local not-for-profit, charitable organizations, attends two monthly support groups, and participates in our new, monthly "Out and About" group.
- Congratulations to our newest neuro-rehabilitation specialist, Marissa King, M.S.W., who passed the social work licensure exam.

Upcoming Events

- The 2011 Annual Conference of the Brain Injury Association of Pennsylvania, Inc., entitled *Critical Insights, Strategies and Alternatives in Brain Injury*, will be held June 27–28, 2011 at the Lancaster Marriott and Convention Center in Lancaster, PA. Four topic areas will be addressed during the keynote sessions and concurrent education tracks: new alternatives in treatment; activism and advocacy; improving the quality of life; and support and services. In addition, there will be over 35 exhibits at the conference. For more information, visit www.biapa.org, or contact Kara Latshaw by phone at (866) 635-7097 or by e-mail at admin@biapa.org. Online registration is available at www.biapa.org.
- The fifth annual *David's Drive* will be held on Tuesday, October 4, 2011 at White Manor Country Club in Malvern, PA. *David's Drive* is sponsored by the Council on Brain Injury (CoBI), which was created by ReMed in May 2007, in memory of Dr. David Strauss. The mission of CoBI is to fund education related to brain injury, to conduct and support research for more effective treatment, and to advocate for improved services. Events at *David's Drive* include a golf tournament, a reception and dinner, a silent auction, and a free golf clinic. To obtain sponsorship information or to learn more about *David's Drive*, call Rose Marie Dalton at (484) 595-9300, ext. 119, or e-mail her at rdalton@remed.com.
- The Annual Conference of the American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine (ACRM) and the American Society of Neurorehabilitation (ASNR), entitled *Progress in Rehabilitation Research*, will be held at the Hyatt Regency in Atlanta, GA, October 11–15, 2011. For more information, visit www.acrm.org.

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Thank you!!

Spotlight: John Stover



John Stover

(Pictured here with his "Volunteer of the Year" nomination certificate, which he recently received for his volunteer work at New Hope Ministries)

Spotlight: Please tell us a little bit about yourself.

John: My name is John. I was born in 1949. I grew up in the Mechanicsburg, PA area. I worked at the G. C. Murphy Company, a 5&10 cent store, for many years. I then went into the Army for three years, and served one and one-half years in Korea. Next, I worked at the Mechanicsburg Water Company, then a bank, and then for the United States Postal Service. After I retired from the Postal Service, I started working in construction. In 2009, I fell off the roof of a house while at work. I now live in Dillsburg, PA.

Spotlight: Tell us about your family.

John: I am married to my wife, Sandra. We've been married 37 years. We have two children, John (Jay) Stover III and Jennifer Price. Both my children are married. I have four grandchildren. Jay has three children, a daughter and a set of twins (one boy and one girl); and Jennifer has an 18-month-old daughter.

Spotlight: Tell us how you got injured.

John: I don't remember exactly what happened. I was told that I fell off the roof of a house while working in construction. My accident happened in January 2009.

Spotlight: What hospital did you go to after your accident?

John: I'm not sure. I think it was Hershey Medical Center.

Spotlight: After Hershey Hospital, where were you transferred for rehabilitation?

John: I went to ReMed in Paoli, PA. [Although John did receive services at ReMed, he first went to HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital in Mechanicsburg, PA, and was then transferred to Bryn Mawr Rehabilitation Hospital.]

Spotlight: How long were you at ReMed?

John: I was at ReMed for almost one year. My wife would come and visit me on the weekends and we would go out to eat at the Exton Diner. I looked forward to her visits. [John went to ReMed in April 2009 and was discharged home in January 2010. John's transition home was smooth because of the support of ReMed staff and his family. Several meetings were held with Scott Peters, M.S., OTR/L, clinical director, Chris Schaub, M.S.Ed., BCBA, clinical specialist, and Laurinda Lee, M.S.W., LSW, rehabilitation case manager, of ReMed; Sally Kneipp, Ph.D., CRC, director of Community Skills Program; Ellen Sanderson, RN, CCM, case manager for Erie Insurance; and John's wife, to plan his transition home. (John's children were also involved closer to his homecoming.)]

Spotlight: What services did you receive at ReMed?

John: I saw different doctors. I took medication every day. I received physical therapy and occupational therapy. I liked to walk around the pond and look at the fish and turtles. I

also went to a day center where I participated in projects and crafts. We would stop at WaWa and I would get a hot dog and soda for lunch.

Spotlight: When you were discharged home in January 2010, what services did you receive?

John: You and Amy came to my house every day. [John is referring to Stefani Hallinger, M.S.W., LSW, CBIS, neurorehabilitation specialist with Community Skills Program, who provided services to him Monday through Friday from 6:45 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and who conducted this interview. Amy Maveety, home health aide with Home Instead Senior Care, provided services to John in the afternoons from 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.]

Spotlight: What types of activities did Community Skills Program help you with?

John: You helped me with organizing my medications, getting ready for the day, doing things around the house, and we sometimes played games. You also helped to get me set up with the day program at Messiah Village in Mechanicsburg, PA and my volunteer work at New Hope Ministries in Mechanicsburg, PA.

Spotlight: How often do you attend the day program at Messiah Village?

John: I go to Messiah Village now on Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and on Fridays from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Spotlight: What types of activities do you do there?

John: When I first get there, I have some hot chocolate and talk with other people. Then we go into the other room and listen to prayer and scriptures. On Fridays, Pastor Richard Long comes and speaks with us. He is a really nice person. We also do exercises, play games, and do crafts. At lunch time, I help others with their

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Spotlight continued (from page 3)

chairs so they can sit at the table. I will also get people's walkers after lunch so they can get up from the table. About once per week, a group of young children come to the day program; we play games with them or they share information with us. I really enjoy going to Messiah Village. The staff are very helpful and I appreciate them.

Spotlight: You also mentioned that you volunteer at New Hope Ministries. Tell us about the organization.

John: New Hope Ministries gives things to people in need, such as food, cleaning products, and toiletry items. Clients come in and shop for items, just like at a grocery store. Also, the third Thursday of the month is a government food distribution, and clients receive fresh foods, milk, and breads. There are a lot of people who come to New Hope Ministries.

Spotlight: How long have you been volunteering?

John: Since July 2010.

Spotlight: What are your responsibilities at New Hope Ministries?

John: First, I get my name tag and task list. I am in charge of the toiletry items and paper products. I go over to those shelves in the pantry and see what needs to be replenished. I mark off needed items on my checklist on the task list. Then, I go into the warehouse and put away any recently-donated items. Once those items are put away, I gather the items that are needed in the pantry. I put the items on a cart and take it into the pantry. I usually make several trips, depending on how much is needed and is available. After the toiletry items are stocked in the pantry, I have other tasks to do. I repackage items. For example, large packages of toilet paper need to be broken down and the rolls wrapped individually. I use grocery bags to wrap individual rolls of toilet

paper. I also break down packages of disposable razors and multi-packs of toothbrushes. Items are repackaged in order to serve more people.

Spotlight: What strategies/tools do you use to help you perform your volunteer tasks?

John: I use the task list which you created. It has a checklist of items on the toiletry shelves, including shampoo, conditioner, laundry detergent, deodorant, toilet paper, and those types of items. The task list also includes a list of the job tasks I can do once the toiletry shelves are stocked.

Spotlight: How has volunteering at New Hope Ministries been beneficial to your rehabilitation?

John: I am able to do things. I like all the tasks. I have also been able to reconnect with old friends, and have met a lot of new people. Some of the other volunteers at New Hope Ministries used to work at the post office when I worked there. I've known Bruce Dennis for a long time; I used to be his son's soccer coach. Now, we volunteer together at New Hope Ministries. Bruce helps me out a lot; he gets items that are high on shelves or are too heavy for me to carry.

Spotlight: You were just nominated for an award by New Hope Ministries. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

John: New Hope Ministries nominated me for volunteer of the year. There was a ceremony held at the Beth El Temple in Harrisburg, PA. My wife, two children and son-in-law came. You were there, too. I received a nomination certificate. It was a great honor to be nominated. I felt appreciated by New Hope Ministries. I really appreciate everyone at New Hope Ministries and what they do.

Spotlight: How do the home health aides from Home Instead [Ashley Marquette and Deb Shaw] help you?

John: They keep me company. We go to lunch after I volunteer on Tuesdays and Thursdays. They also take me to other appointments and to Messiah Village and New Hope Ministries on designated days. When at the house,

they help me with household tasks and we sometimes play games, such as cards. I enjoy being with them.

Spotlight: Tell us a little bit about your daily routine.

John: I get up around 6:30 a.m. I take a shower on designated days and then get dressed. Each morning, I test my blood sugar, eat breakfast, and take my medication. I then feed the cat and usually watch the news, but sometimes I fall asleep in my chair. I then go to Messiah Village or New Hope Ministries. In the afternoons when I get home, I like to sit in my recliner and watch television and sometimes take a nap. Every afternoon, I put food out for the deer and test my blood sugar again. My wife gets home from work between 5:30 and 6:00 p.m. We then go out to dinner. After dinner, I come home, maybe watch some television, and go to bed.

Spotlight: You mentioned that you test your blood sugar each day. What other ways do you manage your diabetes?

John: Well, I test my blood sugar twice per day—once in the morning and once in the evening. I also take medications in the morning and evening. I think Dr. Tocks helps me, too. I see him every three months or so. [John is referring to his primary care physician, Jonathan Tocks, M.D., of Cumberland Family Practice in Enola, PA.]

Spotlight: Dr. Tocks does monitor your diabetes; however, in January 2011, you also started seeing an endocrinologist, Svetlana Shifrin-Douglas, M.D., of Penn State Hershey Medical Group in Camp Hill, PA. Do you watch what foods you eat as a means to manage your diabetes?

John: Only as I'm eating them. [John laughs.] Not really, but sometimes I do.

Spotlight: Are there other doctors you see besides the ones already mentioned?

John: I see Dr. Nadar; he is a heart doctor. I had heart surgery years ago,

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Spotlight continued (from page 4)

before my accident. I see him every six months or so. I see a lot of different doctors, but I don't know them all.

Spotlight: You're right; Venkatesh Nadar, M.D., of Heritage Cardiology Associates in Camp Hill, PA, is your cardiologist. You also see a neurologist, David Gill, M.D., and a physiatrist, Everett Hills, M.D., both of Penn State Hershey Medical Center in Hershey, PA.

John: Yes, I know I see doctors in Hershey, and their names sound familiar.

Spotlight: What other groups or community activities are you involved in?

John: On Sundays, I attend Cedar Hill Bible Baptist Church in Dillsburg, PA. The last Saturday of each month, a group of men from different churches get together for breakfast at Brother's Restaurant in Mechanicsburg, PA. My wife and I also go to the Brain Injury Support Group on the second Tuesday of the month at HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital in Mechanicsburg, PA.

Spotlight: What are some of the challenges you still face?

John: I miss some of the activities I used to do, such as volunteer fire-fighting. I am also not able to drive.

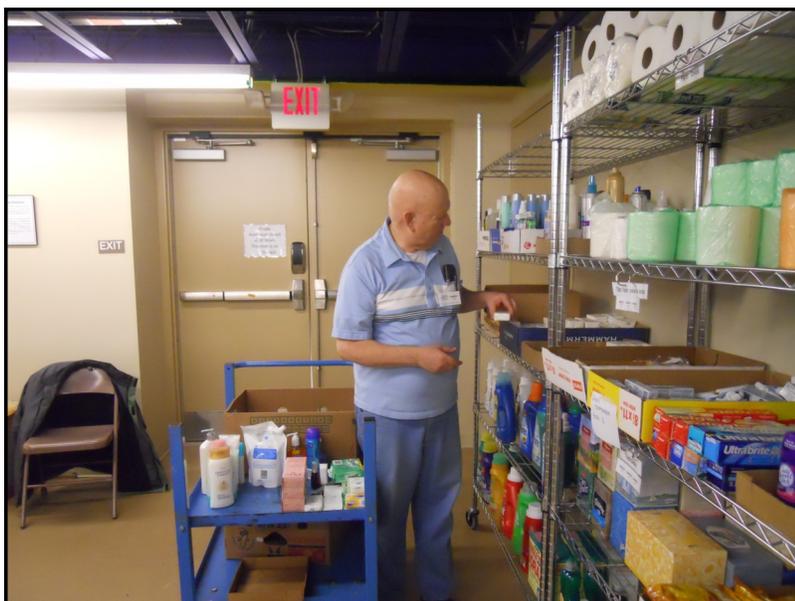
Spotlight: What advice do you have for others who may be recovering from a brain injury?

John: Take your medication, even though it is not always fun. You've got to learn to try new things. Participating in a day program and volunteering is a good idea.

Spotlight: Do you have anything else you would like to add?

John: I appreciate all the help from Community Skills Program and Home Instead Senior Care. Also, my family and friends have been very supportive and helpful. My doctors are also very good.

[Editor's Note: Many people and providers have been, and are, supportive of John's rehabilitation efforts. His family and friends remain committed to supporting John in his rehabilitation. John has been fortunate to receive funding through Erie Insurance. His case manager, Ellen Sanderson, RN, CCM, senior rehabilitation specialist, is to be recognized for her understanding of John's rehabilitation needs and her commitment to assuring that his needs are addressed.]



John carrying out his job tasks in the pantry where he volunteers at New Hope Ministries on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Tips On... Lumosity.com

Lumosity.com is a web-based cognitive training program, designed by neuroscientists, that has been clinically proven to improve brain health and performance. Users report greater attention to detail, better concentration, and quicker problem-solving skills. Lumosity.com offers customized brain fitness plans tailored to your individual goals. By answering questions about five core brain areas (memory, attention, speed, flexibility, and problem-solving), you will be provided with a customized training experience that focuses on the skills you want to improve. For example, memory exercises are designed to help you improve skills such as remembering people's names, recalling the location of objects, and learning new subjects quickly and accurately. Exercises to help you improve your attention enhance skills such as avoiding distractions, concentrating on new challenges, and being more productive at home or work. Other exercises can help you improve your problem-solving abilities, such as determining the best course of action from multiple options or performing mental calculations. The use/purpose of each training exercise is explained, examples are provided, and your progress is tracked. Many of the exercises are **free**, but to obtain full access to the entire training program, a monthly (\$14.95) or yearly (\$80) subscription is required. A lifetime subscription can also be purchased for \$299.95.

Although Community Skills Program's neurorehabilitation specialists typically use real-life tasks for cognitive rehabilitation therapy, some have incorporated cognitive exercises, like those found at Lumosity.com, in their therapy sessions, for specific purposes. Activities like the cognitive exercises at Lumosity.com can also be used when inclement weather prohibits going out into the community for therapeutic activities.

Creativity Corner

A Walk Down Memory Lane

by Corina Pehlman
(client of Community Skills Program)

On Sunday, May 22, 2011, Keila Rodriguez, B.S., neurorehabilitation specialist with Community Skills Program, and I attended the honorable graduation for the class of 2011 at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. I was a part of the class of 2010, so one year later I got to support a lot of friends and underclassmen as they received their diplomas. It was fun, but largely it was rehabilitative. A lot of the whole “rehab” process is to assist your brain with the memory loss it endured. The frontal lobes are responsible for “higher” brain functions, such as planning, decision-making and judgment. Therefore, I wanted to use this trip as a rehabilitative exercise and I created an itinerary. Before I went, I was able to come up with directions as well. The directions were printed from *MapQuest* and my itinerary began with the hour I wanted to wake and ended with the ride home. I allocated time for socialization/free time.

When Keila and I exited off the turnpike in Carlisle, I remembered how to get to campus. As I started seeing stores, campus housing, streets, etc., I uttered phrases like, “Oh yeah! I remember...” and I knew this trip would be extremely successful. Once we arrived on campus and saw where the ceremony was being held, we had to find parking. Luckily, we found a space a half block away off the street, so we did not have to pay a charge and didn’t have to walk far. We entered the seating area for the ceremony; I have a friend who had saved us seats. I first saw my good friend Christiana and asked her to sit with me. She was so happy to see me. We reminisced about our graduation and then I updated her about my rehabilitation. The last time she saw me I was in a coma, so she was amazed to see and hear of my progress. As we sat in our seats, a few faculty members passed and I greeted them. Then the ceremony started.

When you plan for a trip like this, you must anticipate there will be some unexpected changes. The first change we noticed was the commencement address. Originally, we were told that General David Petraeus of the U.S. Army would deliver it. However, President Obama nominated General Petraeus in April to become CIA director and, due to scheduling conflicts, he could no longer commit to giving the commencement address. We noticed in our program that the commencement address would be delivered instead by Allan E. Goodman, president of the Institute of International Education (IIE). His speech was about how his extensive career in international affairs and education is valuable for present day objectives. The world is becoming more and more “global.” Thus, goods, ideas, and services are crossing oceans and borders—even CONTINENTS! Graduates need to realize how interchangeable and malleable goods are. Wherever these graduates go to work, they will encounter an element of international affairs. He gave an outstanding, motivational speech. Regrettably, I discovered that I could not take photos—not because I forgot my digital camera, but because I didn’t charge it and the battery was dead. That was poor planning on my part.

Once the ceremony ended, one of the Law and Policy secretaries said a professor wanted to see me. So I went to where the procession of graduates exited, led by departmental heads. I saw a professor who I chose as my advisor while a Dickinson student. He gave me a hug and words of encouragement. He said it was phenomenal to see me able to walk on my own.

Then, about four friends were going out to eat. They were going to a local Red Robin (about one mile off campus). So, Keila and I joined them. We were seated in a booth and enjoyed a late lunch together over much laughter. I was filled with happiness because I haven’t seen these people in months. I had to say my “goodbyes” and leave.

I was content with the outcome of this trip and extremely grateful to Community Skills Program that facilitated this event for me. Looking back on this trip, I would say my favorite part was the socialization at Red Robin. This trip taught me that the connections I’ve made with “Dickinsonians” will last a lifetime. At the end of this trip, I was left with a sense of achievement. When you endure a traumatic brain injury, you often notice the things you can no longer do. However, I can now do a lot of things. Events like this boost your confidence in yourself. The trip Keila and I took to Dickinson College helped her and me to assess my recovery thus far, and highlighted day-to-day tasks that I still need to work on. I found myself having to plan, recall, and remember a great deal of information. I would like to thank Keila Rodriguez for accompanying me, and the Community Skills Program for their support of this activity.

2011 Creativity Expo

*Featuring the Creative Works of Persons with
Traumatic or Acquired Brain Injury*

WHEN: Saturday, July 9 to Sunday, July 17, 2011

WHERE: Raritan Valley Community College
Art Gallery, North Branch, NJ

There will be a special artist reception on opening day, Saturday, July 9th, from 12:00 to 5:00 p.m., with food and beverages provided. The opening reception will include live performances of music, poetry, and prose, in addition to the visual art and craftwork on display in the gallery through July 17th. This is the eighth consecutive year for this non-profit event. If you are interested in participating or would like more information, call Vince Diorio at (703) 297-7726 or e-mail him at vincentd54@msn.com. The deadline for submitting your notice of intent to participate is June 25th. You can go to www.braininjuryartsnj.com to see pictures from previous expos, get directions to the art gallery, or download the necessary forms for participating in the expo.

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*Serving individuals with brain injuries in
New Jersey and Pennsylvania.*

