

The Madonna Independent, an employee newspaper of Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital, is published every other Friday by the Marketing and Public Relations department. To submit a story idea, news item, announcement or recognition information, contact Tami Rudder, editor, at 486-8606.

Check out the NEW employee focus



PAGE TWO

Celebrate with ice cream and strawberries



PAGE TWO

Research institute gets new camera system



PAGE THREE

## Mother regains life after medical roller coaster

I-a-m a-w-a-k-e. Charity Ann George focused her eyes on the “gaze board” her father, Phil, held and painstakingly spelled out each letter of the simple sentence. On November 12, after nearly six months of being held prisoner in her own body, Charity was back.

Charity, 27, of Holdrege, Neb., began riding her medical roller coaster in April 2007. The active mother of Sofia, 3, and Isabella, 1, noticed a numbness on the left side of her body after working out at the YMCA on April 19. The numbness persisted, and on April 23, an MRI indicated a lesion on her brain stem. Charity was rushed to the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) in Omaha with her husband, Jeremy, at her side.

At UNMC, Charity underwent a battery of tests. Her mother, Sylvia, explained, “Playing that emotional waiting game was hard on the entire family.” The general medical consensus was that Charity had possibly suffered a stroke, but nothing conclusive was revealed.

Charity moved to Good Samaritan Hospital in Kearney, Neb., for acute rehabilitation, within 24 hours, her speech slurred and in a weakened state, Charity made a return trip via ambulance to UNMC. Another scan

revealed the lesion had swelled and the neurologists remained unsure of the cause. Jeremy and Charity’s extended family rallied around her and sought a second opinion at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn.

Another exhausting round of tests at Mayo Clinic provided no basis for the lesion and surgery was not an option. By May 14, Charity’s health was plummeting and she was essentially trapped in her own body. Her neurological function continued to deteriorate. She was unable to move her hands and communicated with eye blinks. “We just kept trying to get a glimmer of connection from Charity,” Jeremy said.

After an extended stay at Mayo Clinic, including promising steroidal treatment, Charity’s doctors felt she would be responsive to acute rehabilitation. “We wanted to help her recover her deficits,” Sylvia said.

On June 25, an air ambulance brought Charity and Jeremy to Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital where she began her rehabilitation on the Long Term Acute Care Hospital (LTACH) unit. “She was like a fragile doll when we arrived,” said Jeremy, a youth pastor.



From left – Sofia, Jeremy, Isabella and Charity George pose in front of the Madonna duplex that her family called home for nearly a year.

(continued on page three)

## Brain injury conference geared to Nebraskans

“Rebuilding Lives in Nebraska” will be the theme for the 2nd Annual Nebraska Brain Injury Conference in Grand Island, Neb., April 24-25 at the Midtown Holiday Inn. Keynote speakers will be journalist Michael Paul Mason and Tim Feeney, executive director and president of School and Community Support Services.

An editor for two literary publications, Mason has appeared on several national media outlets including Lehrer Newshours, CBS News and NPR’s Morning Edition. He is the author of “Head Cases: Stories of Brain Injury and Its Aftermath,” an exploration into the harsh realities endured by brain injury survivors.

Feeney has worked in a variety of capacities in human services and authored more than 40 scholarly journal articles and book chapters and is co-author of the book “Collaborative Brain Injury Intervention: Positive Everyday Routines.” He speaks to audiences about collaborative supports for individuals with brain injury, autism and related disorders.

The event has been arranged by the Nebraska Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Council and Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital is one of the conference sponsors. For more information, call (888) 806-6287 or visit [www.braininjury.ne.gov](http://www.braininjury.ne.gov).

## Are you ready for a challenge?

Only five more days before the Lifestyle Challenge begins! Be ready to show off your “mad skills” including moving toward a healthy weight and cranking up your physical activity minutes. The competition will begin with the first check-in event on Wednesday, April 9, from 7:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. in the North Commons and at Madonna ProActive on Friday, April 11, from 10 a.m.-Noon. Is your team signed up and ready to go? Get your team of five coworkers together, come up with a creative name and sign up NOW in the Employee Lounge, or e-mail Brittany Cochran, Madonna’s employee wellness coordinator, at [bcochran@madonna.org](mailto:bcochran@madonna.org). The entry fee is \$5 per coworker and you’ll discover some fun surprises at the check-in.

Want to participate but can’t find a team? Let us know and we can hook you up with one. No matter what your shape or size, the Lifestyle Challenge is for everyone aiming to be healthier by the 4th of July. Be ready for some crazy, smack-talking fun. Let the competition begin!

## Golden Anniversary

Come celebrate our 50th Anniversary on April 18, 2008. Here are some of the special ways you can mark the occasion:

- Attend an ecumenical service at 2 p.m. in the Chapel featuring a presentation by Sister Phyllis Hunhoff.
- Enjoy some cake and punch at a reception immediately following the ecumenical service around 2:30 p.m. in the North Commons.
- Reminisce while viewing a history display during the reception.
- Purchase a copy of Sister Phyllis’ Madonna history book (\$10).
- Contribute something to the Anniversary Time Capsule to be opened April 18, 2058.
- Attend the Catholic Mass in the Chapel at 4 p.m.
- Read proclamations from Mayor Chris Beutler and Governor Dave Heinemann.

## Let's celebrate Madonna's 50 years!

*The Employee Appreciation Team invites all employees to an ice cream social complete with fresh strawberries!*

**Monday, April 7  
1:30-4 p.m.  
Commons Area**



Sister Valentine McNearney, OSB, the first Madonna administrator, loved strawberries and often bought large quantities of “strawberries on sale.” She asked for volunteers—mostly the Benedictine Sisters—to come to the kitchen (in the old building) and help clean the strawberries. We were rewarded with all the strawberries we could eat with ice cream. It was always a fun time and Sister Valentine loved celebrations. *(contributed by Sister Phyllis Hunhoff, OSB)*

## Capital campaign surges forward

The “Driving Rehabilitation Forward” capital campaign is in full gear. Contributions have reached \$4,874,631 with a total of \$275,185 coming from the Madonna Family. If you have already made a contribution, remember to pick up your “50” name tag sticker in the Foundation office. If you’d still like to make a contribution, there’s still time. Foundation representatives will be in the Commons each Wednesday over the lunch hour. Several departments have already scheduled a campaign presentation at their employee staff meetings. Feel free to stop in the Foundation office anytime from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily to pick up your pledge form. Employees who pledge \$1 per pay period over five years will receive a limited edition anniversary t-shirt or a scrub top with their nursing department embroidered on the left front. Donors of any level are entered into our weekly drawings for gift baskets. Your support is greatly appreciated. And remember – the most important gift you give to Madonna is your employment!

## Consistency

*Examining the Clifton  
StrengthsFinder™ theme*

Balance is important to you. You are keenly aware of the need to treat people the same, no matter what their station in life, so you do not want to see the scales tipped too far in any one person’s favor. In your view, this leads to selfishness and individualism. It leads to a world where some people gain an unfair advantage because of their connections or their background or their greasing of the wheels. This is truly offensive to you. You see yourself as a guardian against it. In direct contrast to this world of special favors, you believe that people function best in a consistent environment where the rules are clear and are applied to everyone equally. This is an environment where people know what is expected. It is predictable and evenhanded. It is fair. Here each person has an even chance to show his or her worth.

### A Madonna employee reflects on how consistency plays out in her life

*submitted by Stacy Reichmuth OTR/L  
Inpatient Occupational Therapist*

Consistency is an important part of my life; I like routine, structure and balance. The healthcare environment is dynamic and fast-paced, which can be very challenging for someone like me who needs predictability. Since consistency is my top strength, I draw upon it to keep myself even-keeled and calm, even when there is high demand surrounding me. Setting up habits or routines with my daily “to do” list helps me keep my responsibilities in check. Another main component of the theme “Consistency” is the importance of fairness. The part of my job I relish is working with the people who come to Madonna for healing and recovery. I approach every new situation with the same mind-set in order to treat all patients equally. I allow each person to show their individuality and have the opportunity to do their best work.

## No fooling—April is National Occupational Therapy Month

*by Virginia Schweitzer, COTA*

May is my 20th year of practicing as an occupational therapy assistant. Each April when we celebrate National Occupational Therapy Month, I am amazed at how far this profession has come. After I completed my degree, people would ask me, “What is occupational therapy?” or, “Will they help me find a job?” I would explain that an occupational therapist (OT) helps you with activities that occupy your daily living such as bathing, dressing, range of motion and exercises.

OTs still focus on those core skills; however, their job description currently encompasses much more. Gone are the days where patients wore black eye patches and slings all day. The commonly used Craig bed, a four-sided mattress bed that lay on the floor, is now obsolete. New medical technology and techniques that an OT performs has lengthened the job description beyond the daily living activities. OTs are trained in vision rehabilitation, cognitive rehabilitation, assistive technology and cutting-edge technology like Bioness and electrical stimulation. The modern OT job description also includes driver retraining, home management skills, strength retraining and neurodevelopment training.

One element that has remained constant over the years is the passion an OT brings to the position. Whether as a new college graduate or a seasoned therapist, the excitement and hope that OTs give to their patients is unwavering. They possess the desire to learn and try new techniques to get their patients back to enjoying an independent life.

After 20 years in the profession, I have never regretted my career choice. It may take me a little longer to get off the therapy mat after a session, or to walk across the Therapy Gym, but the smiles and appreciation from the patients make it all worthwhile.

Please join me in saluting all of Madonna’s OTs.

## Madonna memorabilia requested

What would you like Madonna employees of the future to know about us? Here’s your chance to contribute to a time capsule to be opened on Madonna’s 100th Anniversary – April 18, 2058. We plan to include an issue of *The Independent*, photos of the hospital, a name tag and a daily newspaper, just to name a few. Bring your items to the anniversary reception on April 18, at 2:30 p.m. in the North Commons and they will be added to the capsule.

## Employee Focus: *Fun factoids about Donna*



**Donna Haney, Assistant  
Director of Nursing-LTC**  
MRH employee for 10 years

- 1 I love Mexican food.
- 2 My hot button is taking pictures of my son riding his dirt bike.
- 3 My husband and I enjoy riding our Harley Davidson motorcycle to relax.
- 4 I like to read Janet Evanovich’s books.
- 5 Favorite quote “Trust yourself: you know what you want and need” - Cherry Hartman

## Mother regains life (continued from page 1)

“We had a 24-hour prayer chain going to give her strength,” he added.

A few days later, Charity gave everyone a scare when she coded in her room. The LTACH nursing staff revived her. A trip to BryanLGH East for more tests warranted surgery to correct a colon problem. It was July 11 before Charity was strong enough to transition back to Madonna.

“Eat, walk, talk and have arms that work” were Charity’s goals that Phil penned and tacked up in her room. Also on the list were to be “free of her trach and PEG (feeding) tube.” Laser lights were fitted to her eyeglasses to enable her to point at objects. Phil admired the ingenuity of the Madonna staff. “They invent, create or fit things to meet the needs of the individual and give them hope,” he said.

Charity tackled each therapy challenge and crossed off most of the goals by August. Her PEG tube was removed in December. Charity’s speech and walking took a little longer; but she was encouraged by the staff. “One of the best things about Madonna is they give everyone a chance,” Charity said in her slow, halting voice.

Charity had a brief stay on the Acute unit and spent her final recovery months on Madonna’s VAU/Special Needs unit. Despite setbacks from bouts of seizures, she remained optimistic. On Feb. 6, 2008, Charity typed on her Web site, “I stood today with help. Ya!” An amazing statement from a woman whose body was once sustained by a myriad of tubes.

Donna Haney, RN, watched in awe as Charity remained a stalwart patient.

---

“She has iron will; it takes a really special person not to give up after what she’s been through,” said Donna Haney, a nurse, who worked with Charity from the onset.

---

Donna added, “Charity’s faith and family support never wavered and that played heavily in her recovery.”

The family, including Jeremy’s mother, June George, utilized Madonna’s on-site housing to be near Charity. Jeremy brought Sofia and Isabella for extended visits that lifted Charity’s spirits.

“I was grateful for ‘mommy moments’ with my daughters, like painting their fingernails and playing games,” Charity said. She and Jeremy agreed it helped keep some sense of normalcy during the emotional upheaval of her illness.

Charity was dismissed from Madonna on March 22 and is continuing her rehabilitation at Quality Living, Inc. in Omaha. On Easter Sunday, she attended church in Holdrege, surrounded by her family and friends. Gazing around her home, after being gone nearly a year, Charity exclaimed, “I’m glad to be alive!”

## New camera system analyzes gait and movement

Ever have the feeling you were being watched? Imagine having your every move tracked by 12 infrared cameras taking images from multiple perspectives at 120 frames per second. This is the type of futuristic analysis that has just been acquired by the Madonna Research Institute, Movement Sciences Center of Excellence.

Madonna is the first rehabilitation hospital and gait lab in the country to have the Qualisys motion capture system, which will be used to identify and analyze gait and movement problems.

The 12 cameras are strategically placed around the walls of the Madonna Gait and Motion Lab. The person involved in the study has a minimum of four reflective markers attached to each body segment, with an average of 100 markers placed in total. (*step one*)

The subject walks a path or performs the activity being analyzed, such as using an elliptical exercise device or climbing steps. The cameras take rapid fire images, producing very technically sophisticated mapping information. Each marker must be read by at least two cameras to capture data. (*step two*)

After analysis, the image data is processed through 3D software that shows the subject in real time movement, using a model skeleton. The software is similar to motion software used in movies to create computer generated characters. “Except, these are actual people with real movement problems,” added Dr. Burnfield. (*final step*)

Ultimately, the data produced by the motion capture system will be used to enhance rehabilitation programs, equipment devices and therapies, producing better results and improving quality of life for people of all abilities.

### Step One



### Step Two



### Final Step

## HALL TALK

**Psst!**

**Dr. Paul Dongilli, Vice President and Chief Operations Officer**

**Q.** The staff that I work with talk about how much Madonna’s patient rooms need to be remodeled. We were very excited to learn that there are plans to remodel them, but question why our remodel projects are starting in areas like the Commons Café?

**A.** I agree that the patient rooms need to be changed and that this is one of the highest priorities for Madonna. A major portion of the funds raised through the Capital Campaign will be used for this purpose. I can also understand why it would be concerning to staff when our remodel efforts initially focus on non-patient care areas like the Commons Café.

There are really two separate projects that are underway at Madonna. One is a redesign project and the other is a remodel project. The patient room changes are actually a redesign project. It will take a considerable amount of planning in order to redesign the rooms to meet the needs of not only Madonna’s patients, but the staff members, as well.

Several model patient rooms are being developed to use on a trial basis to help with the redesign process. Two model rooms will be located on Acute and one room will be on LTACH. These rooms will be completely updated with separate staff and patient/family areas.

The model rooms will allow staff the opportunity to experiment with the layout and identify components that work well and what design elements need to be changed. This will take some time and consideration to get the rooms to the desired state. The model rooms should be ready within the next month.

On the other hand, the Commons Café changes are remodel changes that are more straight forward and can be completed faster. These remodeling changes can happen while we test the model rooms.

There are a lot of changes coming with both the redesign and remodel projects in the St. Benedict and St. James areas. To keep everyone abreast on these changes, we provide more timely updates through *The Independent*. Thank you for your question.

*Operating Officer Paul Dongilli wants to address your questions or concerns. Share your operational or employee concerns by e-mailing Paul at [pdongilli@madonna.org](mailto:pdongilli@madonna.org), calling ext. 6242 or sending a note interoffice. Participants can remain anonymous. Questions will be featured in future issues of *The Independent* in his column.*

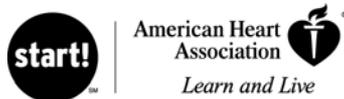
## > CALENDAR

- April 7**      **Employee Appreciation Ice Cream Social**  
1:30-4 p.m.  
North Commons
- April 9**      **Strength Finders Class**  
8 a.m.-noon  
Agee  
Call 6507 to register.  
**Lifestyle Challenge First Check-in Event**  
7:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.  
North Commons
- April 10**     **Blood & Medical Assist**  
Call 6550, 6407 or 6476 to register.  
**Word**  
9-10 a.m.  
Computer Lab  
Call 6507 to register.
- April 11**     **Lifestyle Challenge First Check-in Event**  
10 a.m.-noon  
North Commons
- April 14**     **WHAM Employee engagement**  
12:15 or 3:30 p.m.  
Sheridan Rooms
- April 15**     **MES: Critical Thinking at Bedside**  
5:30-6:30 p.m.  
Sheridan Rooms  
1 CH
- April 16**     **MRH Branding**  
1-2 p.m.  
Computer Lab  
Call 6507 to register.
- April 17**     **Oz Principle III**  
*(Program Managers only)*  
Sheridan Rooms
- April 18**     **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration**  
2:30 p.m.  
Sheridan Rooms

### A Madonna moment



Madonna's chapel with Father Claude Barton, OSB, of Conception Abbey in 1963.



## HEART WALK.

### 2008 Heart Walk

### set for May 17

*Get your team together NOW!*

**O**n May 17, Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital coworkers will join together to raise money for the American Heart Association and boost awareness of heart disease and stroke in our community.

Madonna's goal is to have 12 teams of 10 people, with each team raising \$1,000. Here's how you can get involved:

- 1** Captain a team of 10 people.
- 2** Join a team to help fund raise.
- 3** Make a donation to a team.
- 4** Walk with us on May 17!

Please contact Sara Bills at ext. 8374 or sbills@madonna.org if you are interested in any level of involvement.

## Chapel Services

Catholic Mass is offered Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday at 4 p.m., Wednesday and Sunday at 10:30 a.m. and Saturday at 4:30 p.m. The Worship Service is Thursday at 10:30 a.m. The Hymn and Music Program is Sunday at 3:30 p.m.

- April 6**      Nebraska Christian Men's Choir  
**April 13**     Geri Gibson

Do you belong to a group or congregation that hasn't performed at Madonna? We welcome new talent. Contact Steve Werner at ext. 6831 or swerner@madonna.org.

## Be the type that gives

**Reminder: The Community Blood Bank will stop at Madonna on April 8, from 8 a.m. -12:45 p.m. For further information, please contact Jim Fry at ext. 6413 or jfry@madonna.org.**

## We stand corrected

The March 21 edition of The Independent inaccurately reported that Megan Steele was weaned off her ventilator by LTACH nurses. Madonna's specialized respiratory therapists are responsible for all ventilator patients. As illustrated in Megan's story, it takes a dedicated, interdisciplinary team of experts to provide rehabilitation excellence. We apologize for the error.

## > WAY TO GOs

Thanks to everyone in the **Education Department** who helped cover for me while I was on maternity leave, and an extra HUGE thank you to **Vicki Philippi**, who covered the bulk of my work. I am so lucky to have such amazing co-workers!

—Carrie Stratman  
*Education and Staff Development*

“Way to Go” **Carlota Chavez** of Environmental Services! In preparing for a new admission, Carlota went “above and beyond” to help ensure that the room would make a great first impression for our new patient. She is a valuable asset on the Madonna team. Thanks, Carlota!

—Rebecca Wills  
*Pulmonary Program Manager*

Congratulations to **Donna Haney** on her promotion to assistant director of nursing for Long Term Care. Donna's primary responsibility will be to provide overall direction and supervision for the VAU/SN unit. Please join me in welcoming Donna in her new leadership role.

—Melody Gagner  
*Director of Nursing, Extended Care*

I would like to express my appreciation to the **staff on Acute Rehab West 3-11 shift** for their kindness to me when I floated there. You are extremely nice; your patients even told me you were awesome! I would be glad to float in your area again because you are so pleasant to work with.

—Sarah Parker  
*LPN*

“Way to Go” **Kathy Harrington, Mary Scott, Tony Kirk and Mural-Mural Graphics!** Thanks so much for your help with the historical photo display in the East entrance. The end result is perfect!

—Tami Rudder  
*Marketing and PR*

Thanks to **Kristin Luethke, Mandy Merten, Ian Thompson and Amber Herrington** for working at the first Sports and Recreation Sled Hockey Workshop for Children. Everyone had a great time!

—Linda Ohnoutka  
*Madonna Adaptive Sports and Recreation Program Leader*

“Way to Go” **Melody Gagner, Paul Nathenson and the Long Term Care team** on the restructure they are undertaking on Long Term Care.

A big thanks to **Davie Shutzer-Hill, Lou Ann Manske, Peggy Storm, Jennifer Hobelheinrich and Kristy Taylor** on a Work Environment project. I appreciate everyone's willingness to work together for a comprehensive plan.

—Linda Stones  
*Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer*