CALENDAR

Sept. 4 Caring for the pediatric pulmonary patient

Rebecca Wills, MA, BA, CRT-NPS 8:30-11:30 a.m. Skills Lab Contact Education to register 4401, 4402 or 4409

Limited to eight attendees

Sept. 5 StrengthsFinder Class

8 a.m.-Noon (Need to complete online test) 8:30-am-Noon (Online test already completed) Agee Call 6550, 6476 or 6406 to register

Sept. 6 OZ Principle Session 1

9 a.m.-11 a.m. LAU

Sept. 10 NEO

Systems Workshop

9-11:30 a.m. Flanagan Contact 4401, 4402 or 4409 to register

Sept. 11 Rehab Nursing Education **Nursing and Finance**

Jennifer Howard, RN 7:30-8:30 a.m., 10-11 a.m. 1:30-2:30 p.m., 5:30-6:30 p.m. 7:30-8:30 p.m. Frontier Room 1 CH

Sept. 13 Professional Competency

Handwashing/Infection Control, Safe Patient Handling, Accu chek and Restraints Agee Call 4401, 4402 or 4409 to register for a time

A little change makes a big difference

ave you noticed the oversized jars next to the cash registers in the Commons' Café full of loose coins?

"Your Change Can Make a Change" is the brainchild of the cafeteria employees who were searching for ways to give back to the community. The collective donation of pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters makes a sizeable contribution to local charities each year.



In the past five months, \$449.44 worth of pocket change from staff and visitors helped children at the People's City Mission as they headed back to school. Diane Bartels, Food Service office assistant, recently received a letter from Pastor Tom Barber of the People's City Mission, praising Madonna's partnership. "Thanks to your generous support, kids at the Mission can start their year off right and with the confidence they so desperately need."

The Café staff chooses different charities as beneficiaries for each fiscal year. The program has been active for more than five vears with annual donations of nearly \$1,000.

Monies contributed through October will benefit the St. Benedict Fund that provides emergency assistance to Madonna patients, residents and staff. Other charities on this year's list include Friendship Home and the Red Cross school supplies program. "This is a great way to express both individual and Madonna's core values," said Diane. Thanks to everyone's generosity in helping to make a difference in the lives of Lincoln residents.

I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

-Philippians 4:13

Staff shares their knowledge at Allscripts conference

adonna nurses and therapists showcased their expertise through presentations at the Allscripts Client Experience conference in Chicago on Aug 15-17.

Marilyn Dongilli and Terasa Farlin presented on a "Trans-Disciplinary Approach to Clinical Documentation: 'Oh, the Places You Can Go." Their presentation discussed how to utilize Sunrise Clinical Manager Acute Care's versatility to design transdisciplinary documentation for Plan of Care, Event and Incident Reporting, and Therapeutic Interventions.

Kelli Anderson, Jeff Rowland and Roberta Steinhauser presented on "KBMA Implementation: Keys to Success." Their presentation discussed Madonna's roadmap to success in positively impacting patient safety with the implementation of the Sunrise Knowledge Based Medication Administration system.

Participants earned continuing education credits for the informative sessions. Feedback from attendees indicated the team did an excellent job of sharing ideas to assist hospitals in achieving successful implementations of KBMA with positive impacts for patient safety, improved clinician workflow and clinical documentation.



Staff presenting at the Allscripts conference included (L to R) Roberta Steinhauser, Jeff Rowland, Kelli Anderson, Marilyn Dongilli and Terasa Farlin.

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. Hymn/Music Program is Sunday at 3:30 p.m.

Sept. 2 Ron Walker



nanks to a nomination from former guardsman David Porto, RN, (second from left) the Nebraska National Guard honored Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital and Jennifer Hoebelheinrich with a Patriot Award. Employers qualify for the recognition when they practice leadership and personnel policies that and Reserves. Paul Dongilli, executive vice president and chief communication officer (far left) accepted the hospital award presented by Major General (Ret.) Walt Zink (far right).

MOEPENDENT

www.Madonna.org

The Madonna Independent, an employee newsletter of Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital, is published every other Friday by the Marketing and Public Relations department. To submit a story information, contact Tami Rudder, editor, at 413-4292 or trudder@madonna.org.

All story ideas, news items, announcements or recognition information must be submitted the Friday before the Independent is printed. Note: The deadline for the next issue is

The Independent can be viewed online at www.Madonna.org

Friday, September 7.

Amanda Thompson rediscovered her academic

strengths through the guidance of the staff at

Madonna's TLC, the on-site school

August 31, 2012

Getting to know



at Allscripts Conference in Chicago



KU student enjoys academic success following her recovery from a brain injury

all classes are in full swing at The University of Kansas (KU) for Amanda Thompson. Her daily schedule fills quickly and she's used to multi-tasking, but knows her limits. "I was an overachiever before my accident," said Amanda, a confident, bright 21-year-old who openly shares how a brain injury changed her life.

On July 3, 2010, Amanda was returning from a family gathering at a lake near her home in Lincoln,

Kan. Her then boyfriend was driving and swerved to miss a raccoon on the road. The car rolled into a ravine and Amanda, a front seat passenger, sustained a traumatic brain injury. She lay in a coma for three days at Wesley Medical Center in Wichita, Kan., where she spent nearly two weeks recovering.

Amanda's mother, Sharon realized her daughter would need a specialized program to return to college. During a personal visit from

Jami Colson, admissions development coordinator at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital, Sharon learned how the hospital's programs, including the Kit Scott Therapeutic Learning Center (TLC), could benefit Amanda. After talking with Jami and getting more information from Madonna's web site, Sharon transferred Amanda to Madonna. "I felt confident the staff could get Amanda back on track with her life," said Sharon.

Rehabilitating from a brain injury can be an arduous process. "I just wanted to be normal again," said Amanda, who spent six weeks recovering at Madonna.

In addition to physical and occupational therapies, Amanda's speech language therapists were instrumental in her recovery. "I was like a baby relearning everything," said Amanda.

The TLC staff brought structure and organization back to Amanda's world. As a pre-law major, she had a hefty course load. "Nova [Adams] and Laura [Bennett] spent so much one-on-one time with me," said Amanda, who attended daily classes in the TLC. "They helped me assimilate back to the school environment." Sharon noticed her daughter's self-confidence grew as she completed challenging assignments and her

ability to stay on task increased. "I gained a lot from interacting with the other students, too – playing board games and just talking," said Amanda. The fall of 2010

Amanda reached a milestone when she returned to college. Surviving her accident and working through the brain injury recovery prompted Amanda to change majors to speech language therapy. "I feel like I can

help so many others." She sought Nova's advice on course selections and forged ahead. Amanda earned a 3.9 grade point average her first semester back. She credits Madonna's staff, and especially the TLC, with her academic success. "I would not be in college today without that program," said Amanda, who lives independently near

Amanda is an Accessibility Ambassador at KU, advocating for students with all types of disabilities. She is passionate about a video she's producing to raise awareness on campus. Amanda recently visited Madonna to job shadow a therapist and share her story with others. A survivor, Amanda says she has a second chance at life after her brain injury recovery. "It's just like coming home when I come back here."

Bradley Alarm System

LKN Channel 8 in Lincoln recently featured respiratory therapist Bradley Walburn and his invention, the Bradley Alarm System, which is a portable device that sounds an alarm when a person's oxygen tank gets low. Several Madonna patients are benefitting from this device, as well as individuals in 30 other health care facilities.

Congratulations to Brad for this recognition of his innovative technology.

Adaptive Sports & Recreation Fair

adonna Rehabilitation Hospital will be hosting an Adaptive Sports and Recreation Fair on Sunday, Sept. 16, from 1-4 p.m., at Madonna ProActive. The fair will feature information about sports and other recreational activities. Come ready to play and learn! Through handson linteraction, there will be plenty of opportunities to experience activities in a whole new way. All ages and abilities are welcome to attend this FREE event.

> BASKETBALL • DANCE • GOLF HANDCYCLING • PEDAL CARS POWER SOCCER • RUGBY FENCING • YOGA • TECH TOTS HORSEBACK RIDING • TRAVEL ADAPTIVE EXERCISE

BOOTHS • DEMONSTRATIONS • PRIZES





Sept. 9 Jeri Gibson

Do you belong to a group or congregation that hasn't performed at Madonna? We welcome new talent. Contact Steve Werner at ext. 4803 or swerner@madonna.org.



support employee participation in the Guard

> WAY TO GO

Way to go to the fabulous TherapyPlus
Northwest staff: Robin Allgood, Zach
LaPuma Dustin Reinbold, and Christine
Widman for a wonderful year! Your
teamwork, compassion and excellent patient
care are only a few of the attributes that
make this clinic a great place. Thank you!

—Jill Smith, TherapyPlus Northwest Mgr.

Kudos to these departments for ZERO recordable incidents: Linen Service staff (more than two years) and Patient Service Technicians (more than one year)!

Congratulations to **Todd Winter** and his wife Lana, on their beautiful baby boy, Jameson Michael, born on August 14.

Kudos to **Shawn (Sears) Scheierman** and her husband, Jeff on their marrage.

—Carol Ann Trapp, Support Services

A special Way to go to the **St. Jane de Chantal staff**, including the managers, supervisors, charge nurses and floor staff, for your support and dedication to the residents. Long term care services marked several achievements this year: becoming CARF accredited, a successful annual state survey, maintaining a nearly full census and posting a stellar financial year. Thank you all for contributing your talents to help us achieve these positive outcomes.

—Melody Gagner, St. Jane de Chantal
Director of Nursing

Congratulations to the TherapyPlus and Fit for Work staff and leadership. Your individual talents and outstanding dedication helped us celebrate the best year ever in outpatient business!

—Lynn Hallowell-Gottsleben Director, Outpatient Services

During the week, I often call Madonna and have been blessed to hear "Frannie's" [Littrell] voice. She is always very gracious and professional — an excellent ambassador as the "Voice of Madonna."

—Marcia Matthies Nebraska State Stroke Association As Employee Appreciation Team (EAT) chair for the past 10 years, Marla Buresh spearheaded many of the employee activities including: Christmas meals, Husker tailgates and St. Patrick's Day candy distribution. She even served as Santa's helper one year! Marla was quick to offer a smile and words of appreciation that made employees feel welcome at the events. Thank you, Marla for your leadership.

Marla recently handed the chairperson's responsibilities to **Ande Arterburn** from Human Resources - congratulations to Ande!

Workforce Retention & Development

-Mark Hakel

Way to go to all of the **development** coordinators and nurse liaisons who work hard to make the transition to rehabilitation a good experience for patients. Your strong relationships and dedication to the trauma hospitals have helped grow our programs and ensure patients and families get to choose the quality rehabilitation program they deserve. Thanks for all you do!

Way to go to the LTACH, ARU, RDP and OP teams for the quality of care you give to spinal cord patients. You are so passionate about their care. I appreciate all the sacrifices you make, especially during high volume days, to provide the absolute best care. You are hardworking, creative teams that always put the patient first. Our excellent outcomes are because of YOU!

—Diane Ulmer Spinal Cord Injury Program Manager

Congratulations to Jennifer Bausch,
Tim Bausch and Melissa Starr for
becoming APTA board certified in the
areas of Geriatrics (Tim and Jennifer) and
Cardiopulmonary (Melissa). They have been
nationally recognized for their advanced
knowledge and proficiency in evaluation
and treatment of patients within these
specialty areas. Way to go!

—Marilyn Dongilli, Sarah Koebernick and Jenna Woodford IP PT Supervisors Our recreation therapists are incredibly talented and adaptable! Thanks for all you do to help Madonna's patients and community members get back to the activities that matter the most to them.

—Kathy Schmidt, Clinical Supervisor of Inpatient Occupational Therapy

Joan Stollar and Cheri Towle recently celebrated 25 years with Madonna! We are grateful for your experience and look forward to your continued input with Madonna's food services. Your diverse perspective helps standardize our services to best meet customer's needs. Thank you for your dedication!

—Jennifer Luhn and Sheila Folsom Food & Nutrition Services

Qutstanding Therapy - A big thank you to the dedicated and highly skilled occupational therapy (OT) staff we are blessed to have at Madonna. You provide patients with the best care in regards to daily self-care training, home management training, transfers, and so much more.

Despite all the recent changes, including: a team meeting structure, a new computer documentation system, as well as a new plan of care, you continue to provide top notch care. Thanks for all you do!

—Mikayla Humm, Kathy Schmidt and Linda Storz

Inpatient Occupational Therapy Supervisors

Thank you to the **Case Management department** for all your hard work and
dedication to Madonna. You pull together
as a team to accomplish the tasks at hand
and assist one another graciously in times of
illness, vacation and high census. Thank you
for being advocates for Madonna's patients
and families. Well done, team!

—Susan Koerber, Case Management

Congratulations to **Jennifer Hoebelheinrich** who recently received the Patriot Award from the Nebraska National Guard in recognition of her supporting employee participation in the Guard and Reserve. Jennifer was nominated for this award by David Porto, RN.

—Susan Klanecky Vice President of Patient Care and Chief Nursing Officer

Way to go Madonna Lab! Each of you have made a significant contribution to a great year. Testing volume has increased 50 percent with a decrease in cost per test of 14 percent. Outpatient revenue is up 23 percent and our customer satisfaction surveys remain 10 percent above target. Our engagement scores are the highest I have ever seen and your level of commitment shows. It is an honor to work beside you, a pleasure to lead you, and a joy to come to work each day.

—Patty Eschliman Clinical Laboratory Manager A big thanks to all the **environmental service staff.** You work hard to keep Madonna one of the cleanest facilities around. This is recognized by the many people who come through our doors. Thanks for overcoming obstacles and pulling together. You are a great team!

—Lisa Burns, Cheryl Jurgens and Ulonda Amerson Environmental Services

I want to recognize and thank the ITS and clinical staff members working on the Sunrise project. You have worked for several years to not only implement the Allscripts system, but also to develop the rehabilitation specific content needed to make the system functional at Madonna. Your excellent job and efforts have enabled us to go live with all of the medical specific modules this year. Your work has gained the attention of other hospitals and was recently recognized at the Allscripts – ACE national conference. This is an impressive accomplishment in an area where other hospitals have struggled and an achievement that you should be extremely proud of — way to go!

I also want to recognize and thank the ITS and clinical staff members working on the Quality Measure Reporting Project.

The CMS mandated reporting of these measures has proven to be a hardship for many organizations. This team has worked tirelessly to overcome the barriers of reporting to assure that we have systems in place to meet the October 1 reporting deadline. Once again, a Madonna team has succeeded where others have failed – congratulations on your success!

—Paul Dongilli Executive Vice President and Chief Operations Officer

The Institute for Rehabilitation Science and Engineering staff congratulates

Dr. Judith Burnfield on her new son, Ethan Wells Burnfield, born May 21 with bright blue-gray eyes and a full set of hair.



Let's celebrate our accomplishments!

Sarah Jensen's engagement. Jennifer Smith begins her Clinical Fellowship with the 1 Center team. Ashley Yates and Erin Reier taught Advanced Pediatric Feeding and Swallowing. Ashley Yates had a baby boy, Porter. Teresa Springer had a baby girl, Amelia. Amy Potter rode the 302 mile Tour De Nebraska Bicycle Tour.

Suzanne Seberg completed FEES training.

Cheryl Wagoner and Carrie Windhorst were featured in the Talk Muir magazine about their study for early intervention with trach/vent patients with the Passy Muir valve.

—Julia Daehling

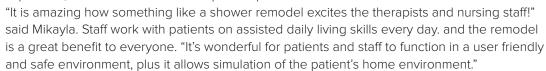
Communication Disorders Clinical Supervisor

From drab to fab: St. James remodel update

onstruction crews have completed the patient shower room remodel on 2 West. The new showers have increased in size and offer conveniences such as:

- Designated places to hold towels, patient's personal items, clothing, waterproof dressings and other supplies
- Separate wet and dry areas
- Grab bars and moveable shower heads to allow for various transfer set ups to simulate home environments
- Shelving and soap dispensers that patients can reach from a seated or standing position

Mikayla Humm, inpatient occupational therapy supervisor, said the new areas are open for patient use.



Following the completion of 2 West shower rooms, construction moves to 1 Center and 2 Center showers. These will be refurbished and ready for patient use in early September. Remodeling of the 1 Center nursing station and patient dining area is underway. Patients have been dining in a temporary area east of the current space during construction. Temporary walls were erected to keep patients, staff and visitors safe during the remodeling. The project is expected to be completed by the end of the calendar year. Your patience is appreciated during the renovations.

Green Team recycling tip

asani® water is taking steps to reduce its impact on the planet. The bottle design is made from up to 30 percent plant-based material that replaces some of the nonrenewable petroleum or fossil-based resources. Still designed to be 100 percent recyclable, the bottle helps save our world's precious resources. This bottle is just the beginning of a quest where every plastic bottle is made from materials that are 100 percent renewable, as well as recyclable.



Ice Mountain water® has reduced the amount of PET plastic in bottles by 60 percent. This helped avoid using more than 250 million pounds of plastic. The company has reduced the greenhouse gas emissions by 30 percent in the last five years. The bottle has 30 percent less plastic than other beverages, making it more lightweight. Since 1998, nearly 20 million pounds of paper has been saved by redesigning the label to be smaller.

Flu shots available starting Sept. 25

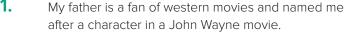
Employee Health will kick off its annual influenza vaccination campaign beginning Tuesday, Sept. 25 in the Sheridans from 7-11 a.m.



- Influenza vaccinations are free to ALL Madonna employees and volunteers.
- injections and mist vaccines are available.
- Check the Madonna Intranet under "Employee Health & Wellness" for more details.

Last year, more than 90 percent of Madonna employees were vaccinated against the influenza virus. Thank you for being proactive about your health and helping to keep Madonna patients, family members and visitors from getting the flu.

Employee Focus: Fun factoids about Striker —



- 2. If I hadn't done my hair before work today, I wouldn't have said "yes" to being photographed!
- **3.** My dream job is to be an interior designer.
- **4.** My favorite fashion designer is Burberry.

I enjoy working on VAU/SN because the majority of our patients are long term care. This allows me to form therapeutic relationships and develop a closer bond with them which adds to continuity of care.



Striker Detweiler, LPN

MRH Employee 3 years

Meet the Madonna Chairman's 2012 GOAL Award recipients



Gary Hausmann has savored life from the cockpit of an airplane for nearly 35 years. As chief commercial pilot for Werner Enterprises since 1999, Gary has the uncanny ability to instinctively react to situations — skills that helped save his life in a motorcycle accident on Sept. 1, 2006.

Gary, then 51, was riding his motorcycle from the hangar in Omaha, Neb., to his hometown of Blair. A motorist approaching Gary on the two-lane highway was suddenly rear-ended by a truck, pushing her car into Gary's path. He quickly locked the brakes and jumped off his bike as it vaulted over the car. Gary's body slid underneath and his head, encased in a helmet, slammed into the car's frame. Gary was airlifted to University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) with multiple injuries including a diffuse axonal brain injury, among the most serious type of traumatic brain injury. During part of his two-week hospitalization the formerly articulate pilot lay in a drug-induced coma.

Reneé Hausmann was told her husband would need extensive rehabilitation. "When I came to Madonna, it just felt right," said Reneé. On Sept. 16, Gary was admitted in a wheelchair, on a feeding tube and barely speaking. During his initial evaluation, Gary couldn't identify an apple or write his name. His Madonna team set goals to restore the pilot's physical and cognitive independence. Nursing staff weaned Gary from the feeding tube and a walker soon replaced his wheelchair. "Initially, I could only navigate three steps," said Gary.

Not a quitter, Gary poured his energy into therapy. "I didn't understand the meaning of the word 'can't," said Gary as he healed through intensive physical, occupational and speech language therapy. Baking cookies in the therapy kitchen and maneuvering in and out of a car were steps toward independence. His love of flying surfaced during a therapy outing to Duncan Aviation. "Being around the airplanes brought Gary back to life," said Renee, as her husband's progress soared like one of his jets.

By mid-October, Gary discharged from Madonna walking, talking and with his cognitive skills intact. Gary continued skills in outpatient therapy in Omaha and began the lengthy process of regaining his pilot's license. In 2011, Gary passed his Class One medical test and resumed his position at Werner. He has no residual side effects from the brain injury. Gary serves on the Nebraska Brain Injury Advisory Council and is an outspoken advocate for motorcycle helmet legislation.



Bob White of Lincoln, Neb., was returning from a hunting trip on Dec. 23, 2007, when a car driven by a drunk driver rammed into the trailer he was examining on the shoulder of Interstate 80. The impact pinned Bob between the trailer and his vehicle, causing a skull fracture, broken pelvis and severely injuring his left leg. Bob, then 53, spent more than six weeks at BryanLGH Medical Center, lost 54 pounds, endured 18 surgeries and the amputation of his left leg. Bob had one main goal — to officiate at the U.S. Olympic Track and Field Trials - and he was determined to reach it. "He had a mission, even in the hospital bed, that his intent was to go to the Olympic Trials," said his wife, Susan.

Bob, an avid runner, dedicated teacher and track coach, chose Madonna's outpatient program, TherapyPlus, for intensive rehabilitation training with his new prosthesis. His therapy team devised a program around his passion for running. His therapists used cutting-edge technology, such as the Proprio® 4000, to restore Bob's sense of balance. Bob logged miles walking Madonna's

hallways and tackling the outdoor terrain. As Bob conquered milestones, his therapists kept developing ways to challenge Bob. "They were creative with what can get you through your new lifestyle," said Bob. In addition to the scheduled therapy, Bob made a commitment to walk 13,000 ft. on his own after each session. Susan encouraged and celebrated every step of his recovery.

By the summer of 2008, Bob achieved his goal to officiate at the U.S. Olympic Track and Field Trails in Eugene, Ore. "Madonna's outpatient care created a relaxed environment that resulted in a philosophical attitude toward achieving excellence for myself," said Bob. He stresses the importance of rehabilitation and how the therapists changed his life. "I'm using their rehab principles and everything they taught me."

Today Bob has returned to the classroom as a social studies teacher at Lincoln High and resumed his coaching duties. His expectations for students and athletes runs high. "After what I've been through, I tell students that I don't hear 'no." Following a year of rigorous rehabilitation, Bob no longer needs a cane. He recently returned from a repeat performance as a referee at the prestigious Olympic Trials. "What a godsend the therapists were in helping me face my new life perspective," said Bob.



When **Bretton Cole** was just two years old in 2002, he fell from his cousin's shoulders and sustained a traumatic brain injury. He was life flighted to Mercy Hospital in Sioux City, lowa, where he remained in intensive care for 10 days. The once active and outgoing toddler couldn't walk, talk or use his right side.

Bretton's rehabilitation care team at Madonna developed a customized pediatric rehabilitation program to help Bretton overcome the challenges of his injuries and reach the normal developmental milestones for his age. He worked hard in physical, occupational and speech therapy, slowly regaining his mobility and language skills.

Bretton progressed to outpatient rehabilitation at Madonna TherapyPlus, where he continued improving his skills for the next seven years. His therapists incorporated his love for music and sports into his therapy sessions, using musical instruments and games to develop his strength and

motor coordination. "Rehabilitation has changed my life because I wouldn't be at this point right now without it. I'd still be in a wheelchair," said Bretton.

Bretton's mom, Krissy, commented, "Everyone at Madonna cared about him and his outcome. They worked hard getting him to be as normal as possible."

Now seventh grader, Bretton is active in band and orchestra. "I like to write music. I play the piano, French horn and I sing. I'm learning the guitar. I think creativity comes to me really easily," added Bretton.

"I never doubted for a minute that he was going to be exactly who he was supposed to be," said Krissy. "When they said he wasn't going to make it. That wasn't an option. God had a great plan for him. He wasn't meant to be here for such a brief amount of time. He loves everyone and he's impacting people through his experience and his optimism."



In October 2004, 21-year-old **Briana Beckworth** was driving up a hill when she had to swerve to avoid striking a car that had veered into her lane. Her vehicle left the roadway and rolled, while the driver of the second vehicle fled the scene. Briana was airlifted to a Lincoln, Neb., hospital, where she endured several surgeries to try to repair a compression fracture of her L4 vertebra.

When she arrived at Madonna, Briana had lost feeling from the waist down and couldn't sit up or walk. Additionally, neurogenic pain from her spinal cord injury and post traumatic stress from the accident plagued her recovery.

Briana's team collaborated to address all of her complications and supported her through rigorous therapies, including body weight supported treadmill training, occupational therapy, cognitive therapy and counseling.

By the time Briana progressed to outpatient treatment, she could walk independently with a cane and set her sights on living independently and working toward her bachelor degree. Her journey was not without complications. Briana developed foot wounds and neurogenic pain that required powerful medication, which left her physically and mentally drained.

"I just had to keep moving," said Briana. "I wasn't going to let this accident define my life. The accident made me broaden my horizons. I would never have gone to college before."

With a new pain medication and continued rehabilitation to improve her mobility, Briana graduated with a bachelor of science degree from Concordia University, was accepted to the University of Nebraska Medical Center's College of Nursing and graduated with a registered nurse degree in May 2012.

In addition, Briana became a certified trainer for NOAH's Assistance Dogs - canines that are specially trained to help provide stress relief for people in crisis situations. She also pursued equestrian competition, ranking nationally in Grade III dressage competition.

In September, Briana will marry her longtime boyfriend, Steve, and has accepted a nursing position with Johnson County Hospital in Tecumseh, Neb. She and Steve just bought a home on an acreage for their horses and therapy dogs.