A Newsletter for Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital

June 26, 2009

#### 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 idea, news item, announcement or recognition information, contact Tami Rudder, editor, at 486-8606.

All story ideas, news items, announcements or recognition information must be submitted the Friday before the Independent is printed. The deadline for the next issue is Friday, July 3.

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

Tea time for St. Jane residents



Inaugural Venue/ Madonna Golf Classic

Trisha Meili – a message

of hope and possibility



402.489.7102

## Lincolnite making strides toward goal

ccording to Sid Whigham, it was a sneeze that led him to Madonna. September 2006, he was home alone, sneezed and immediately felt a bone snap in his neck. Sid, then 49, of Lincoln, Neb., drove himself to the emergency room at BryanLGH Medical Center. Sid, who is claustrophobic, initially didn't want the MRI, but finally consented. The scan revealed multi-myeloma, a blood cancer, had seeped into his bones, causing them to weaken. Surgeons implanted

a plate in Sid's spine to stabilize it and fitted him with a neck brace. He completed two months of cancer treatment including chemotherapy and radiation. The neck brace was Sid's companion for seven months as he endured a stem cell transplant to replenish healthy blood cells lost during chemotherapy. Sid was off work from his position at Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company for nearly a year.

Fast forward to July 5, 2007, when Sid signed his retirement papers after logging 30 years at the Lincoln plant. Three

days later, Sid's wife, Sandra, dialed 911 after her husband complained of being weak and disoriented. Doctors at BryanLGH discovered Sid's abnormally high blood glucose level of 1,300 mg/dl and diagnosed him as having Type 2 diabetes. A blood clot in Sid's right leg forced doctors to amputate it right above the knee – known as a transfemoral amputation. "I had to amputate that leg or the doctors said I'd be dead within 48 hours," Sid recalled. He was grateful for Sandra's unwavering support. "I thank God for my wife; I needed someone to stand by me," said Sid.

Fellow parishioners at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints helped Sid's family financially during this traumatic life event. "If it wasn't for my church family and my wife, I wouldn't be here today," said Sid, an active church member.

After the amputation, Sid was happy just to be alive. The staff at Able II Prosthetics and Orthotics custom fit Sid with a prosthesis. "It was cool, they were able to match my skin color," said Sid.

Sid knew the prosthesis would offer newfound freedom. He recalls standing for the first time, holding a walker for support. "I felt like I was 6'5" instead of 5'6"!" exclaimed Sid. He realized months of physical therapy stood between him and independence.

> In August 2008, Sid began outpatient therapy at Madonna TherapyPlus. Unfortunately, after only a few weeks, Sid needed to temporarily discontinue therapy when it was determined he needed a bone marrow transplant. By September, his immune system rebounded, and Sid was given the green light to resume therapy.

Physical therapist Jessica Foster saw that Sid was very determined, pushed himself to the limit and had a wonderful sense of humor. "I'll

never forget the look on his face when he was walking with his cane and I took it away from him—he had finally reached his goal to walk," remarked Jessica. Sid had an adjustment with his prosthetic, but he's met each challenge with a smile.

"Just being at Madonna and visiting with the other patients really motivated me," said Sid. He equated the adjustment of walking with his prosthesis to riding a wave of highs and lows. "I'd start to get depressed, then would see other patients struggling and count my blessings," said the spiritual man.

Sid recently strode down the hallway at Madonna aided only by his three-point cane. "I had zero muscle mass when I came to Madonna, now I feel like King Kong," said Sid. "My goal was to be walking solo by July, and that's exactly what I'll do," he added.

hortly after 9 p.m. on April 19, 1989, a young woman went for a run in New York's Central Park. Hours later, two men walking in the park found her near death, the result of a brutal beating and rape. In a coma, with more than 75 percent blood loss and critical injuries, including a traumatic brain injury, she wasn't expected to live. But Trisha Meili did survive, and today, despite the life-altering attack that forced her to relearn activities, such as rolling over, telling time, buttoning her blouse or identifying simple objects, she continues to be a source of inspiration and advocacy.

Now, 20 years later, Ms. Meili continues

20 years later

Now, 20 years later, Ms. Meili continues to share her story of hope and possibility. One she first shared with the Madonna family at the 2003 Goal Awards. More recently she met with Tiffany and Brandon Verzal and Michaella Kumke to share her insight on the importance of specialized and immediate rehabilitation after a serious injury. Additionally, she described the outpouring of love and support she received from friends, family, healthcare workers and complete strangers. She credits the human spirit's ability to love and thrive as part of the miracle of her recovery.

Ms. Meili's perspective will be shared in the documentary focused on brain injury rehabilitation that will debut at the Madonna Chair's 2009 Goal Awards in October.

See the Madonna Chair's 2009 Goal Awards documentary trailer at http://bit.ly/pathways. Save the date! October 13, 2009.



(L to R) Trisha Meili, Brandon Verzal and Tiffany Verzal.



Sid Whigham learned different techniques during his therapy sessions to master walking with his prosthetic leg. Jessica Foster, physical therapist, said Sid tackled every challenge to reach his independence.

# FREE employee health screens

- Are you proactive about your health?
- Do you know your numbers?
- Has your blood sugar been creeping up?
- Do you have family members with heart, stroke or diabetes history?

# Sign up today for your FREE health screening to be held:

Tues., July 21, 6:30-9:30 a.m. (Main/Sheridan Rooms)

Thurs., July 23, 8-9 a.m. (ProActive)

Weds., July 29, 6:30-9:30 a.m. (Main/Sheridan Rooms)

Sign up sheets are located in Employee Health, the Employee Lounge, on the Wellness bulletin board by the Commons Café and in the Trainers Room at ProActive. The health screening provides a convenient way to measure your health. Learn about your most important health numbers, what your healthy ranges are and ways to maintain or improve your health.

#### The health screening includes:

- Lipid Profile and Blood Glucose are used to evaluate your overall health. These tests require you to fast for at least 10-12 hours prior to the test. Drink plenty of water the day before the health screening so that you are well hydrated. You can drink water to take medications the day of your screening.
- Biometrics (Blood pressure, weight, body mass index, body fat percentage and waist measure)
- Optional screens for TSH (thyroid function at \$10) and/or PSA (prostate CA \$20)
- Allow approximately 10-15 minutes to complete the screening.
- Madonna is providing the health screening at no cost to you. You are responsible for payment (due at screening) if you choose to have your TSH or PSA screen.

Contact Brittany Baack at ext. 8611 if you have questions.

# Medical recycling program calls for volunteers

adonna's Mission Effectiveness
Committee has reinstated its
medical recycling program to
benefit medical clinics in developing nations.
Blue medical donation barrels have been
placed throughout the hospital for donations.

- Bins are located on:
  - Subacute on Lower Level
  - St. Jane de Chantal North and South
  - 100 and 200 nurses' stations

Volunteers are needed for each location to monitor and help clear the bins. Once the bins are full, Lorinda James, medication aid on Subacute, will arrange to have them taken to storage and emptied. If you are willing to help, please contact Lorinda James at ljames@madonna.org or ext. 6646.

Madonna is working with C.R.O.S.S. Ministries to identify areas where donations can bring immediate benefit. C.R.O.S.S. Ministries will coordinate with Madonna to have donations picked up every two months and will track where they are going.

Remember that unused medications are NOT allowed. Medical supplies or equipment that are in good condition can be donated.



St. Jane de Chantal Long Term Care residents were treated to a first-class tea party on Friday, June 19. Staff baked homemade bread and brewed fresh tea that was served to the residents on fine china. Ruth Behschner (center) was thrilled to receive room service from (left to right) Activities Coordinator Beckie Kimes, Assistant Director of Nursing Donna Haney and Director of Nursing Melody Gagner.

## Employee Focus: Fun factoids about Nancy



Nancy Hall Outpatient Social Worker/ Case Manager MRH employee for 21 years

- 1 I love estate sales especially at old houses.
- 2 My favorite saying is "God give me patience, but hurry!"
- 3 I am a birdwatcher who keeps an informal "life list" in my head.
- 4 I play the piano, hand bells and am a beginning harpist.
- 5 I make "the best" sticky buns using my bread machine.

I serve as both social worker and case manager in the Rehab Day Program and Outpatient Services. My duties include managing the mild traumatic brain injury and geriatric assessment programs, serving as a support person and a resource for community programs for patients/families, and as a leader for team/family meetings for our regular outpatient and pediatric programs.

# soteria spa

a holistic healing spa at Madonna ProActive

Soteria Spa will have a new menu available beginning July I. Complete with revised money-saving prices and refreshing spa services. It's like Christmas in July!

#### "One Can"

Food Bank of Lincoln, Inc. 2009 Campaign Against Hunger July 13-24

hese two simple words unlock the power you have to fight hunger in southeast Nebraska. Whether you give food or funds "one can" make a difference. And, when each person contributes, we can help friends and neighbors triumph in the fight against hunger.

Please bring non-perishable food items to these designated drop-off points throughout Madonna:

- Main Entrance
- 52nd Entrance
- NOPS Entrance
- Lower Level (between the Pharmacy and Lab)
- Education
- Commons Café
- 2nd floor nurses station
- Acute nurses station
- VAU/Special Needs nurses station
- ECN/ECS nurses station

Monetary gifts can be dropped off in Human Resources. If you have questions, contact Marla Buresh, ext. 6084. One Can... together we can!



# Straight from the hard hat

- Seating, positioning and wheelchair storage areas are under construction in the east end of the gym and should be completed in four weeks.
- Construction on the final staff area in the northwest end of the gym will begin next week.
- Remodeling continues throughout
   Independence Square and a new pickup truck will be brought in.
- The library/family resource center (located east of the aquarium) is in the works and will be one of the last areas completed.
- A new Lower Level computer server room, double the size of the current space, is slated for completion at the end of July.
   New fiber optics cables are being rerouted to the new room in preparation for ELMER's release in September.

#### **Activator**

Examining the Clifton
Strengths Finder<sup>TM</sup> theme

hen can we start?" This is a recurring question in your life. You are impatient for action. You may concede that analysis has its uses or that debate and discussion can occasionally yield some valuable insights, but deep down you know that only action is real. Only action can make things happen. Only action leads to performance. Once a decision is made, you cannot not act. Others may worry that "there are still some things we don't know," but this doesn't seem to slow you. If the decision has been made to go across town, you know that the fastest way to get there is to go stoplight to stoplight. You are not going to sit around waiting until all the lights have turned green. Besides, in your view, action and thinking are not opposites. In fact, guided by your Activator theme, you believe that action is the best device for learning. You make a decision, you take action, you look at the result, and you learn. This learning informs your next action and your next. How can you grow if you have nothing to react to? Well, you believe you can't. You must put yourself out there. You must take the next step. It is the only way to keep your thinking fresh and informed. The bottom line is this: You know you will be judged not by what you say, not by what you think, but by what you get done. This does not frighten you. It pleases you.

#### A Madonna employee describes how Activator works in her life

submitted by Michelle Wiggins, OTD, OTR/L

The Activator strength fits me well as I like to get things done and get things done NOW. As an occupational therapist, I use this to my advantage. Possessing the Activator theme allows me to focus on projects for my patients or my profession and get them done efficiently. I tend to be a leader among groups and am always asking "what steps or action can we take right now to accomplish our goal?" I consistently seek productivity and multi-task to complete all of my "immediate" tasks.

An example of my Activator theme being put to work is when I decided to go on the Wheels for the World mission trip a few years ago. I read about the program and decided right away that this was something that I wanted to do with very little research about the program and the dangers of traveling abroad. I tend to "live and learn," which can be an advantage or a disadvantage depending on the situation.

### Checking in with Gary Dacus

ary Dacus suffered a C-5/C-6 incomplete spinal cord injury when he was hit riding his motorcycle on July 20, 2007. He completed more than two months of rehabilitation at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital before returning home to Wichita, Kan. When Gary left Madonna in the fall of 2007, he resolved to "get busy living." During the past two years, he's kept that promise.

Gary and his wife, Jean, admit the first weeks back home were trying. "Madonna helps ready you for the transition, but I don't think there's anything that can fully prepare you," said Gary. Fortunately, he and Jean both carry a positive outlook. "It's not a week or two transition – it's been two years and we're still learning," Gary said frankly.

They remodeled their home to allow Gary more independence. The modifications included a ramp, roll-in shower and laminate flooring that make it easier to maneuver around in a wheelchair. "Every little bit of independence you gain is so huge," noted Gary. He recalls his first solo outing – to the barber. The reserved parking space was on a little slope and a woman walking by asked if he needed help. "No, thanks, I think I've got it," replied Gary, right before he fell making the transfer from his truck to the wheelchair. Looking back on the incident, Gary laughed. "You learn not to let your pride get in the way of someone offering assistance," he added.

An avid outdoorsman, Gary's Chevy truck is equipped with a Bruno TAS<sup>TM</sup> driver seat that lifts and rotates. The truck modification enabled Gary to resume his love of hunting. He also joined the Physically Challenged Bow Hunters of America. "It's a great resource for physically disabled bowhunters," shared Gary.

The former building project manager returned to work part-time following his accident. "My previous employer was tremendous, but I got laid off when the economy slowed," said Gary. He's working



with Vocational Rehabilitation Service to utilize his general contractor's license on independent projects and secure an all-terrain power chair for job site visits. "Voc-Rehab has been another great resource for me, both from an equipment and people standpoint," Gary added.

Gary and Jean recently traded their camper for a "toy hauler" trailer. The entire back end folds down into a ramp and doesn't require a wheelchair lift. They've done a few minor modifications like adding a wheelchair accessible shower. "I love being able to take the grandkids camping again!" Gary shared.

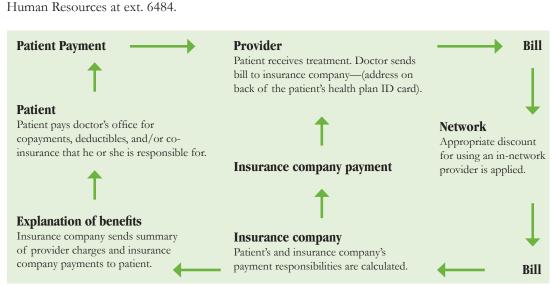
Gary's grandchildren have quickly adjusted to his physical limitations. Initially, one of his younger granddaughters wouldn't touch him and thought she would "catch it," Gary recalls smiling. "They can now see my progress and know I'm the same 'Pa-Pa' inside," added Gary. His grandchildren are one of the many inspirations that keep him going.

Another big inspiration in Gary's life is Jean. He wants people to appreciate everything his wife does and what she's endured in the past two years. "I'm the person that was injured, but often a person loses sight of the fact that it affects many people, particularly your spouse," said Gary.

According to Gary, life is good and he's optimistic about what lies ahead. People tell Gary his attitude is great, but he wouldn't do it differently. According to the active husband, father and grandfather, "life is too short – you can't waste time being bitter." "I'm getting back out there – every little step is a step in the right direction," he added confidently.

## Steps to paying a health care bill

hen you go to the physician, specialist or hospital for your health care needs, there is a specific process that occurs to get your bill paid under the Madonna Health Plan. The graphic below outlines the steps in the payment process as it moves from the provider visit to the payment to the provider. If you have questions, please contact Wendy Charlton in Human Resources at ext. 6484



## > CALENDAR

June 29 Effective Meeting I 9-11 a.m.

Flanagan

July 1 Med Aide

Competency Testing 7:30 a.m. or 12:30 p.m.

Agee

July 6 NEO

July 8 StrengthFinders

8 a.m.-Noon

Agee

Call 6507 or 6406 to register

July 9 Blood & Medical Assist

7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Agee

July 13 Food Bank Drive of Lincoln

Campaign Against Hunger

July 13-24

July 16 CPR Re-certification

9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. or 5-9 p.m.

Agee

Call 6550, 6476 or 6406

to register

### **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.

July 5 American Lutheran Praise Team Nebraska Christian Men's Chorus

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.



Students from Lincoln Public Schools Bright Lights summer learning program spent a morning touring Madonna on June 18. Occupational Therapist Caroline Hadland watches as one of the students tests her memory on the saccadic eye fiaxtor.

#### HALL TALK

#### Psst!

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

Q. With all of the St. Benedict remodeling, it will be difficult to display recognition boards for events like Nursing Week and Occupational Therapy Month. Will space be available for these types of display?

A. I agree that the new design of the St. Benedict wing is not conducive to displaying tables and displays for the types of events you mention. We do not want to lose the ability to recognize the work of all Madonna employees. I personally enjoy seeing the pictures of staff in various departments and reading about members of the Madonna teams.

The goal was to continue this tradition in a way that did not detract from the therapeutic design of the space. Space on the wall in the south hallway (near the Commons entrance) has been dedicated for this express purpose. A new bulletin board with a glass front and lock was recently installed. Departments can reserve the bulletin board for up to two weeks to highlight specific displays throughout the year. Nancie Ninneman, in the Marketing and PR department, will be the contact person to schedule time on the board. I hope employees will find it a suitable alternative to what's been done in the past. Please contact Nancie at nninneman@madonna.org or ext. 6891 to reserve the space.

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, 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.

# Gather, Golf, Discover

iscover a NEW golf tournament to benefit Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital's Adaptive Sports and Recreation program, featuring players of all skill and ability levels.

Venue Restaurant and Lounge, in partnership with Madonna Foundation and ArborLinks Golf Course, is pleased to present the inaugural Venue/Madonna Golf Classic. This fundraising tournament will help Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital expand its Adaptive Sports and Recreation Program, which helps children and adults with acquired physical disabilities discover the many benefits of sports activities.

The tournament will be held Saturday, August 22, at AborLinks Golf Course in Nebraska City. For more information about the tournament, go to www.Madonna.org.

A special thank you to the tournament sponsors: Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital Foundation, Venue Restaurant and Lounge, ArborLinks and Husker Auto Group.

Be a part of the newest and most exciting golf tournament of the season!

# Technology is making mobility easier

adonna Rehabilitation Hospital, with Bioness® Inc. and Nebraska Orthotic and Prosthetic Services, is hosting a workshop on new technology and treatment options for people with mobility limitations due to stroke, brain injury or neurological disorders.

Wednesday, July 22 6:30 p.m. at Madonna ProActive Or Thursday, July 23 2:30 p.m. in the Sheridan Meeting Room Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital

See demonstrations of the Bioness® NESS® units, talk with Madonna clinicians, learn about new devices for assistive communication and environmental control and more.

The event is FREE, but space is limited. Please register online at Madonna.org or call Nancie Ninneman at 402-483-6891 or email nninneman@madonna.org by July 20.

#### To my Madonna family:

here are not enough "thank yous" in the world, but I hope this is enough for everyone who helped my husband, Keith. All the staff provided wonderful care to Keith following his stroke over a year ago. With laughter and patience, Keith gave his best effort to progress in therapy. When he collapsed at Madonna last month, the medical team responded immediately, and I was able to stay with Keith and hold his hand. Despite being a very determined fighter, Keith passed away. All the nurses, therapists and doctors were very supportive of our family during this difficult time.

Keith had a big place in his heart for everyone at Madonna and so do I. Thanks to my family on Acute Rehab for making my first day back easier.

—Kathy Stetson Acute Rehab TBI Unit