



# the INDEPENDENT

Madonna Rehabilitation Hospitals

Spring/Summer 2020

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**FIRST HOPE**

Madonna Rehabilitation Hospitals complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex. Madonna Rehabilitation Hospitals does not exclude people or treat them differently because of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex.

### MISSION STATEMENT

Madonna Rehabilitation Hospitals are Catholic hospitals that provide physical medicine and rehabilitation services to children and adults throughout the nation. We rehabilitate those who have sustained injuries or disabling conditions so they can fully participate in life; lead research to improve outcomes; prevent physical disabilities and promote wellness through community programs.

### CORE VALUES

Our core values reflect Madonna's history, mission and beliefs.

**Collaboration • Hospitality • Respect • Innovation • Stewardship • Teaching**





## A letter from the President & CEO

As Catholic Hospitals, we continually seek ways to meet the needs of those underserved in our communities. Madonna has always been a critical component of the region's health care continuum, providing the next step in recovery from serious injury or illness. Our commitment to this mission remains constant. We realize that once patients leave our inpatient programs, they desperately need comprehensive outpatient care to support their journey to independence.

This issue of the Independent outlines Madonna's Outpatient and Community Based Services promoting health, healing and wellness. We also share an update on our technology development efforts. We are proud to report that Madonna's First Hope technology will partner with Curbell Medical, a leading medical device manufacturer, to commercialize the First Hope system. This partnership will make the technology available to health care facilities across the globe.

Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic has presented us with many challenges. Like you, we are adapting to a new normal. Madonna is ready to assist our hospital system partners and prepared to provide specialty medical and rehabilitative care for patients who have recovered from COVID-19. Our staff are resilient and strong. Their dedication to provide the best patient care possible has never wavered—helping our patients regain their independence is that important. In times of uncertainty we draw upon our faith, along with Madonna's long-standing history of innovation and hospitality, for strength. Together we will overcome this challenge, enabling those we serve to live fully and well.



Paul Dongilli Jr., Ph.D.,  
President and CEO

The INDEPENDENT is a magazine published three times a year for friends of Madonna. Direct questions or comments to: 402.413.4292 or [info@madonna.org](mailto:info@madonna.org).

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[Madonna.org](http://Madonna.org) | 800.676.5448

Visit [Madonna.org/VirtualTours](http://Madonna.org/VirtualTours) for an up close look at our hospitals.



Throughout the COVID-19 outbreak Madonna has proactively taken a number of protective measures by encouraging patients, families and staff to follow good hand hygiene, social distancing guidelines and to stay away from the hospital if they do not feel well. Our Incident Command Team meets regularly to ensure our hospitals are responding to the COVID-19 outbreak in a manner that is consistent with CDC recommendations. The safety and well-being of our patients is our top priority.

Specific protective measures include:

- Restriction of access for patient family caregivers and visitors
- Active screening of all individuals entering the hospital including temperature taking
- Restricted employee travel
- Moved majority of Lincoln outpatient therapy from the hospital campus to off-site clinics and suspended caregiver participation at all four clinics
- Suspended volunteer programs and on-site community meetings and events
- Developed a Special Care Unit to care for post COVID-19 patients

Like all health care systems, Madonna is planning for a potential surge of patients.

As a rehabilitation hospital, we anticipate admitting a greater number of patients needing specialty care following illness. Our position in the health care continuum is integral to full recovery for these patients, and we have the utmost concern for their health and safety, as we do for all who entrust their care to us.

We understand the COVID-19 outbreak has been stressful on our patients, families and staff, but taking these necessary precautions is the appropriate action at this time to prevent the spread of the virus and protect our community.

For more information about our plan, visit [Madonna.org/COVID19](http://Madonna.org/COVID19).



# Building on progress

# REHABILITATION DAY

On April 1, 2004 (no fooling!), the Lincoln Campus Rehabilitation Day Program opened for business with four patients. The comprehensive outpatient program, commonly known as RDP, launched from a need to build on the progress a patient achieves during their inpatient stay. To date, RDP has helped more than 2,000 individuals with physical or cognitive disabilities return to their homes and communities. In November 2016, RDP expanded to the Omaha Campus.

RDP is an intensive treatment program customized to meet the specific needs of each patient. The overall goal is gaining real-life functional skills. Participants receive coordinated therapies, medical monitoring and education. Schedules include individual and group therapies three to five days a week. The average length of stay in the RDP is six to eight weeks.

A team of highly skilled therapists, a social worker and registered nurse, play integral roles in a person's care plan. Madonna physical medicine and rehabilitation (PM&R) physicians continue to monitor patients in RDP. Kristen Miles, registered nurse and RDP program leader, has been at the helm for 12 years. "The intensity of three to six hours of daily therapy helps patients achieve their highest level of independence," Miles explained. "Having RDP on campus allows for collaboration between inpatient and outpatient teams to ensure a patient's smooth transition through our continuum."

A unique feature of RDP includes activities designed to help persons return to work or school. Work re-entry supports individuals in resuming their careers or volunteer positions. RDP partners with the Nebraska



Christy Womeldorff concentrates on completing a sequencing task with guidance from Amanda Oberle, certified occupational therapy assistant. Christy, of Fort Hays, Kansas, was only 39 years old when she survived a massive stroke in 2018. Her lengthy recovery at the Lincoln Campus included two months in Rehabilitation Day Program.





Learn more about the Rehabilitation Day Program at:  
[Madonna.org/RehabDay](https://Madonna.org/RehabDay)

Vocational Rehabilitation staff to assist clients in return to work or identify new employment opportunities. Madonna's Therapeutic Learning Center, staffed by a special education teacher, simulates the normal school routine. Madonna education specialists work with everyone involved in a patient's care to prepare for their return to the classroom.

Community re-entry activities, e.g. to a museum or zoo, allow patients to practice problem-solving skills during a variety of outings. Community outings and cooking groups are ideal opportunities for patients to hone community and household skills.

Family member and caregiver involvement are critical for success. "We educate families on techniques that allow

patients to practice newly acquired skills in their home setting," Miles said. Close bonds often develop in RDP, many blossoming into lifelong friendships. "It's a support group with patients and families connecting and leaning on each other," Miles said. She points out two young men discussing their injuries over a computer game. "It's more than just therapy."

What impresses Miles is watching people heal through the continuum of care and live life fully. "It's knowing you've made a difference in someone's life during one of their most difficult times."

## BUILDING INDEPENDENCE



A head cook for Children's Hospital & Medical Center, Dan Hamilton has a passion for the craft. But he was no match for Guillain-Barré syndrome or GBS. In 2019 the rare neurological disorder left Dan unable to hold a knife, much less cut up veggies. Thanks to Madonna's Rehabilitation Day Program, Dan regained his chopping skills alongside other patients with help from Mary Kriha, occupational therapist.

Navigating the community and social situations can be difficult for people who've suffered an illness or injury. That's why Independent Living Skills (ILS) is a big focus for patients in Rehabilitation Day Program. In addition to the individual's treatment plan, taking part in a cooking group gives patients the opportunity to work with others in planning, shopping and preparing a meal in the therapy kitchen. Community outings like going out to eat to a restaurant or to the bowling alley are another way patients can work on community skills in a safe way. More importantly, ILS activities allow participants to remaster skills such as planning and organizing.







# Kansas SCI survivor embraces LIFE ROLES

Eric Bartel smiles watching his children race around their backyard. “I’m so grateful to be here,” says the 34-year-old husband and father. Faith, family and a fun-loving attitude dictate his daily routine. After surviving a car crash that left him paralyzed, Eric leaned on those priorities in navigating a new life.

On April 19, 2019, Eric was driving home from a family gathering near his hometown of Hillsboro, Kansas. “I’d traveled the gravel road hundreds of times, but that night, I didn’t make it home,” Eric said, his memory blanking on details. Minutes later, his parents discovered Eric’s 2003 Subaru in a ditch and their son ejected from the car.

Flown to Ascension Via Christi St. Francis in Wichita, surgeons broke the devastating news to Eric and his wife, Danielle. He’d damaged his spinal cord at the C4-C5 level, and fractured



**“The doctors told us Eric may never walk again.”**

**Danielle Bartel**  
Eric’s Wife

back vertebrae and ribs. “The doctors told us Eric may never walk again,” Danielle said. The couple, parents of three boys, including twins Logan and Mason, 9, and William, 4, remained positive while contemplating the next step in Eric’s recovery—rehabilitation.

A week later, they boldly decided to move Eric four hours away to Madonna’s Lincoln Campus. Paralyzed from the neck down, he established goals—to walk, use his hands, drive, and most importantly, be an active husband and father. “The entire place





See more of  
Eric's recovery at:  
[Madonna.org/EricBartel](https://Madonna.org/EricBartel)

During his recovery from a spinal cord injury, Eric Bartel enjoys some "dad" time with his youngest son, William, on the pediatric playground at the Lincoln Campus.

It's about the people working with you."

When Eric transitioned to the outpatient Rehabilitation Day Program, a new team built on his progress to keep the momentum going. "What impressed me in this big of an organization was the consistency; staff supporting us every step of the way." On Aug. 30, 2019, Eric, assisted by a cane, patiently walked to his car and headed home.

He eased into work at his auto accessory shop, church and family responsibilities. "I can dogpile on my boys again!" Eric said, laughing. "I love the whole bedtime routine; reading books and tucking them in." The one year anniversary of his accident finds Eric hitting the trails and training for a 5K walk.

"It's been life-changing," said the humble Kansan, reflecting on his journey.

"Madonna is a place of healing and growth; there's something special about it."

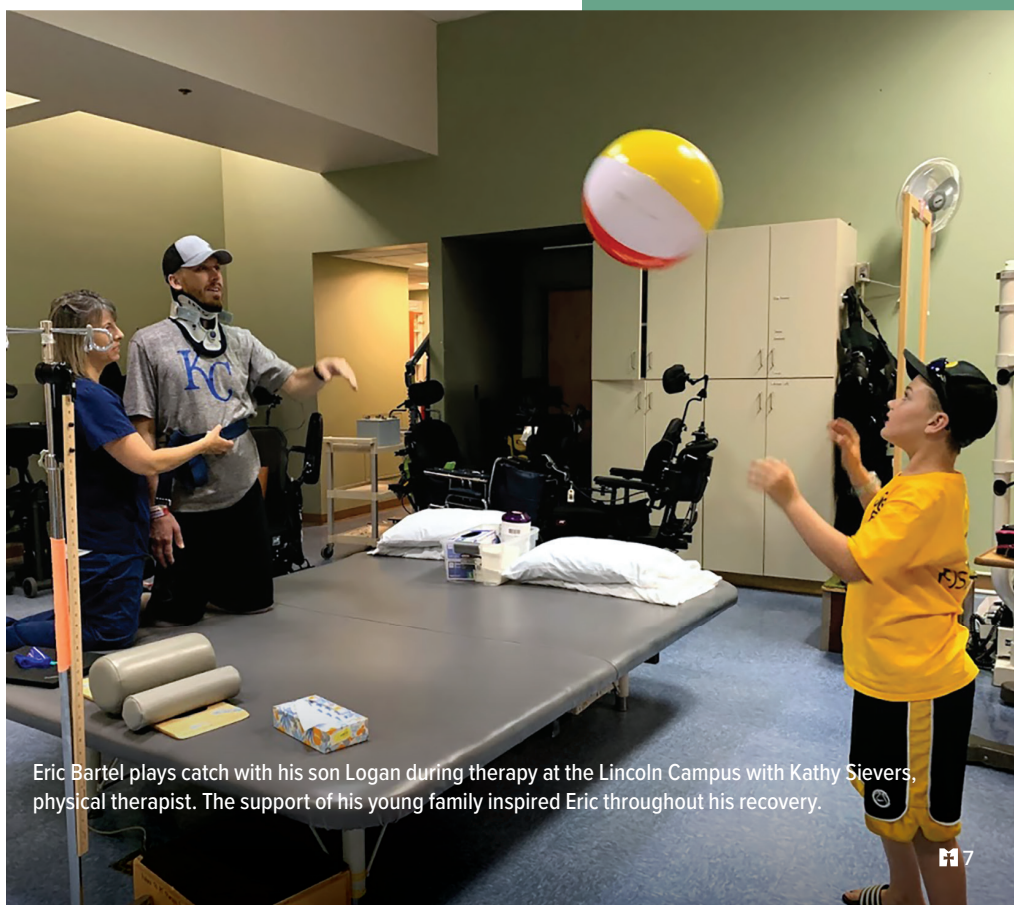


## FAMILY-CENTERED CARE

Madonna subscribes to a family-centered care approach during rehabilitation. We encourage family and friends to participate in therapy sessions and patient care activities. Playing catch with your loved one in physical therapy or cooking together in the therapy kitchen are examples of everyday activities that bring a sense of normalcy to life. Support groups are offered in spinal cord injury, brain trauma, stroke, pediatrics, amputee and cardiac, to help parents and other caregivers feel confident in caring for their loved one upon return to home.

here, I don't know how it works, but it's incredible," Eric said, reflecting on his team of doctors, nurses, therapists and support staff.

During eight weeks of specialized inpatient therapy, Danielle celebrated with her husband as he relearned to sit up, eat, brush his teeth and walk. Countless repetitive steps on the Lokomat, robotic-assistive treadmill training, helped Eric's brain and spinal cord reroute signals to his legs. The Bioness H200, wearable hand technology using low-level electrical pulses, challenged his fingers to relearn fine motor tasks. Eric quickly bonded with staff and appreciated their expertise. "I learned the Lokomat is not going to make you walk, not going to 'fix' you.



Eric Bartel plays catch with his son Logan during therapy at the Lincoln Campus with Kathy Sievers, physical therapist. The support of his young family inspired Eric throughout his recovery.



# Dr. Yevgeny Zadov pursues his CHILDHOOD PASSION

Dr. Yevgeny Zadov was 9 when he immigrated with his parents to Brooklyn, New York, from the former Soviet Union. An only child, Zadov had dreams of one day helping people by becoming a firefighter or a physician. He decided to pursue medicine after shadowing a group of physicians for a high school class, inspired by the patient connection. It wasn't until college, however, that Zadov landed on physical medicine and rehabilitation (PM&R) when a college course tasked him with writing a paper about his ultimate career plans. "In researching the world of sports medicine, I stumbled across physiatry. What struck me about the subspecialty is that no matter what patients have going on, PM&R can help them live a better life."

Zadov is board certified in physical medicine and rehabilitation. He earned his doctor of osteopathic medical degree from New York College of Osteopathic Medicine and completed his residency at Long Beach Medical Center in Long Beach, New York. In addition to a

master's degree in health administration, he's completed a brain injury fellowship. "The brain is an amazing organ. There's unlimited potential for being creative with problem solving and thinking outside the box when coming up with a solution for patients."

Since September 2019 he's been making daily rounds on the Omaha Campus. Called "Dr. Z" by both patients and coworkers, Zadov cares for a diverse patient population including individuals recovering from cancer, brain injury, stroke and other neurological conditions. His friendly smile and laid-back personality, coupled with an East Coast accent, immediately puts patients and family members at ease. "PM&R is such a dynamic, exciting field. Each patient's story is unique and therefore provides different solutions that empower the patient to help themselves. My role isn't necessarily to cure a condition, but help patients better manage that condition which leads to a more meaningful life."



Dr. Yevgeny Zadov, a physical medicine and rehabilitation physician on the Omaha Campus, builds rapport with Douglas Hartley, an amputation survivor.



# Best Docs in America

## DR. BIERNER

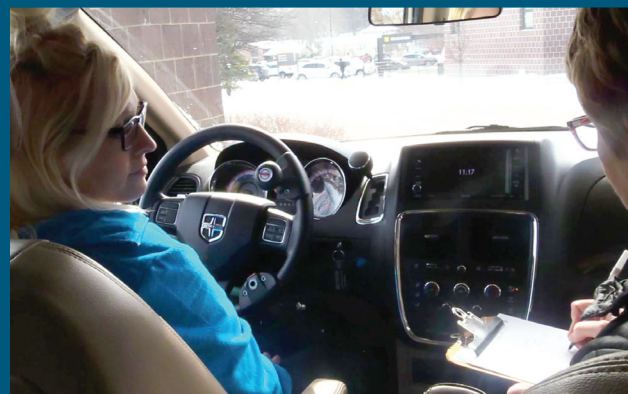


For more than 60 years Madonna has offered patients world-class care, so it's no surprise that a member of the medical staff has been named to the prestigious list of Best Doctors in America. Samuel Bierner, M.D., recently was named a Best Doctor in America for 2020. Dr. Bierner, a physiatrist, chairs the physical medicine and rehabilitation (PM&R) residency program and is

the medical director of the Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital-Omaha Campus. The program is a partnership between Madonna and the University of Nebraska Medical Center. This partnership is the only PM&R residency program in Nebraska and one of few in the region. To date, the program has matched 10 psychiatry residents, who will rotate through both campuses during their four years of training.

Bierner graduated with his medical degree from the University of Texas Medical School in San Antonio. He earned his master's degree in rehabilitation medicine at the University of Washington Graduate School. Bierner completed his physical medicine and rehabilitation residency at the University of Washington Hospitals and then a fellowship in clinical neurology in the Human Motor Control Branch of the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). He held the title of professor at the UT Southwestern Medical Center where he was the PM&R program residency director for 11 years prior to moving to Omaha.

The Best Doctors in America represents nearly 40,000 doctors in the U.S. representing more than 450 medical specialty/subspecialty combinations.



Amanda Snook listens as Linda Storz, occupational therapist, shares the positive results of her final evaluation during Madonna's outpatient driver retraining program. After suffering a paralyzing spinal cord injury, Amanda mastered driving with adaptive controls and gained confidence behind the wheel.

### COMPREHENSIVE OUTPATIENT CLINIC

Unable to stay on task at school. Adjusting to a leg brace post-stroke. Relearning to drive. These are just a few examples of everyday challenges Madonna helps individuals address in the TherapyPlus outpatient assessments.

Experiencing a significant illness or injury may result in limitations ranging from short term to long term and possibly throughout one's lifetime. TherapyPlus offers several comprehensive assessment options to help adults and children adapt and fully participate in life.

Individualized assessments are tailored to the unique needs of each person. TherapyPlus targets a wide range of medical, physical, cognitive, social-emotional, and communications functions that encourage individuals to lead the highest quality of life.

Our experts offer the following comprehensive outpatient clinics: Brain Injury, Pediatrics, Spinal Cord Injury, Stroke and Mild Brain Injury/Concussion. Specialized assessment plans are developed based on responses to a phone screening interview prior to scheduling. Evaluations may vary from a few hours to as long as two to three days.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, contact Bruce Waddington, clinic coordinator at 402.413.3781 or [bwaddington@madonna.org](mailto:bwaddington@madonna.org).



# Brain injury survivor's RACE TO RECOVERY



Drew Casper embraces mom, Connie Casper, during a family photo shoot after Drew's crash. "I'm so thankful for my family's support through my recovery," Drew said. "It helped me stay upbeat in therapy."

Time is measured in many ways: ticks of a clock, the sunrise and sunset, a school bell. For Drew Casper, the past year has been measured in steps, and a look at the pedometer on his phone paints a clear picture.

"Before my injury I averaged 9,000 steps per day," the 23-year-old senior accounting major at Kansas State University said. "Last April, it says I took 60 steps total. I didn't even have my phone so someone else took them for me."

A car enthusiast and curator of the Midwest Dream Car Collection luxury car museum in Manhattan, Kansas, Drew was invited to a race car ride-along in Topeka on March 31, 2019. During his second ride in a Corvette ZR1, the driver lost control and smashed into a concrete barrier.

The crash shattered Drew's C1 vertebra, the small bone that connects the brain and spinal cord, an injury known as internal decapitation. He also suffered a traumatic brain injury, brain bleed and several broken bones. Doctors performed a dangerous surgery to reconnect his head and spinal cord at Stormont Vail Hospital in Topeka.

Given just a 15% chance of survival, somehow, Drew pulled through.

"I've really had to step back and think about how short life could be or could have been," Drew said. "I'm lucky to still be here."

Doctors at Stormont Vail encouraged the Casper family to choose Madonna for rehabilitation. When Drew arrived, he only had limited movement in his left arm. He couldn't talk. A ventilator and tracheostomy tube helped him breathe. He was a long way from the fit, active college senior headed for a joyride one month prior.





See more of Drew's recovery at:  
[Madonna.org/DrewCasper](https://Madonna.org/DrewCasper)

What was still functioning was Drew's drive. Taking therapies seriously, he pushed each day to improve cognitive function, speech and motor skills. Three weeks into his stay, he flipped a switch.

"When I walked into his room, he said, 'Hey Dad how's it going?'" Drew's father, Dave, recalled. "Holy cow! He was speaking in complete sentences!"

Step by step, Drew made gains in speech, occupational and physical therapies. First came his ability to speak, move his arms and stand independently.

Then, Drew started walking.

"His therapists decided he was going to take some steps and within a few minutes he was walking down the hallway," Dave said. "It was amazing to see him go from almost total paralysis to walking on his own."

As Drew gained strength, he shifted from Madonna's inpatient therapy to the outpatient Rehabilitation Day Program. His confident steps graduating from walking to sprints, agility work and push-ups, something he continues today.

"I'm probably now in the best physical shape of my life," Drew said, nearly a year after his injury.

Today, Drew said he largely feels like he's back to normal. Comprehension and information processing still take some extra time, but he's returned to work and school. Physically, he's back up to those 9,000 steps per day.

"Almost all of who I am today is thanks to Madonna," Drew said. "It's remarkable to have gone through what I did, to look back and to now be very happy to be back to normal."

## STRUCTURED INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM



Madonna ProActive's aquatic track is one of many amenities patients can utilize while participating in the Structured Independence Exercise Program.

As patients wrap up their outpatient therapy sessions, Madonna provides the opportunity for individuals to continue their rehabilitation exercises through the Structured Independence Exercise Program. Located at Madonna ProActive, Madonna's medically-based health and fitness center in Lincoln, the program allows patients to work with a TherapyPlus expert to develop a personalized exercise plan. Participants complete their program during a 30-day free membership at ProActive. Individuals have access to therapists and trainers to help improve functional abilities and return to normal activities of daily living.



# Wheelchair tennis player **MAKES HISTORY**

The dream to launch a Madonna youth wheelchair tennis program became a reality in 2016 with a grant of \$20,000 from the Johnny Carson Foundation.



Kevin Heim, executive director of Woods Tennis Center, works with Lily Lautenschlager on her backhand. Heim coaches Madonna's youth and adult wheelchair tennis teams.

The Johnny Carson Foundation grant helped a high school sophomore realize her own dream while making history at the same time. Over a four-day tryout period, Madonna Match Point wheelchair tennis team member Lily Lautenschlager successfully earned a spot on the Lincoln East High School girls reserve tennis team. She is the first young woman in Nebraska to play high school tennis using a wheelchair. The main difference for a wheelchair player is that balls can bounce twice instead of once.

Lautenschlager was born with a rare condition called Klippel-Trenaunay Syndrome. The congenital malformation causes excessive growth of veins, soft tissue and bones, along with swelling of the legs, ankles and arms.

Youth sports chairs, granted through Madonna's adaptive equipment loaner pool, are made possible in part because of a gift from the Johnny Carson Foundation. Last year, 415 patients and community members participated in a variety

of competitive and recreational activities thanks to donors who support Madonna's Adaptive Sports and Recreation Program.

"That sports chair changed my life," Lautenschlager shared. "I used the youth chair for tennis, basketball and adaptive dance. It gave me a way to connect with my peers. I used to skip PE class until I got my sports chair," she added. With her service dog, Kahoot, by her side, there's nothing Lautenschlager can't tackle.



## **SAVE THE DATE 2020 EVENTS**

### **DISH & BLOOM**

Aug. 28, 2020  
Country Club of Lincoln

### **MILES FOR MADONNA**

Oct. 3, 2020  
Zorinsky Lake, Omaha

### **MIRACLE NIGHT FOR MADONNA**

Nov. 20, 2020  
Country Club of Lincoln



# Laser-focused on MISSION

By Kimberly Shirk  
Madonna Foundation Board Member



I first walked into the halls of Madonna after a friend of mine had a stroke. Having spent many years in rehabilitation in Iowa after my own accident, I hoped to offer encouragement. I helped escort him to physical therapy where memories flooded back. A year later I attended a fundraiser at Madonna and was simply amazed at the technology, level of care and faith built into this incredible rehabilitation hospital.

Madonna is truly a place of miracles. Individuals and families alike walk through the doors at some of the lowest points of their lives. They exit with strength, joy, confidence and hope. All of this is combined with world-class technology, research and a true family of caregivers who deal with the most medically complex cases in the country.

The next five to 10 years will be a transformative time in Madonna's history. With the exceptional medical care we are blessed with in this country, very few institutions are concentrating solely on rehabilitation to the extent that Madonna is. We have the experience, we are laser-focused on our mission and I cannot wait to see where we go next!



## MAKE A DIFFERENCE COVID-19

Thank you for your faithful support as Madonna monitors COVID-19, while continuing to offer world-class rehabilitation to some of the nation's most complex patients. By working with hospital systems in Lincoln and Omaha, including our partners, University of Nebraska Medical Center, Nebraska Medicine and Children's Hospital & Medical Center, we are coordinating our responses to enhance clinical care and alleviate the incredible needs and demands on medical systems in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

You may have heard about the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act which helps provide financial stability and relief for individuals, families and businesses affected by COVID-19. It also offers tax benefits which promote critically-needed charitable giving during this unprecedented time.

How does the CARES Act enable you to help Madonna?

- If you do not itemize your taxes, the CARES Act will allow you to deduct up to \$300 in charitable giving for the 2020 tax year.
- If you itemize your taxes, the CARES Act lifts the cap on annual charitable giving from 60% of adjusted gross income to 100%.
- For corporate donors, the CARES Act raises the annual limit for corporate charitable giving from 10% to 25% of taxable income.

As our critical mission continues, so do our needs. If you would like to help, you can make a gift on-line through our website by visiting [Madonna.org/donate](https://Madonna.org/donate) or by giving us a call:

- John C. Glenn  
Vice President of Development  
402.401.5051
- Suzanne Sughroue  
Associate Vice President of Development  
402.413.4782

We greatly appreciate your support and help!



# Korff Endowment supports ACADEMIC SUCCESS

In 2013, a long-time Madonna donor and friend, Glenn Korff, left an amazing legacy for the pediatric patients at Madonna. His generous gift helps children realize one of their most important goals after an accident or illness—to return to their school and friends.

Glenn was a Hebron, Nebraska, native and attended the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He earned his MBA from the Wharton School and had a long career in finance in New York City before retiring and moving to Boulder, Colorado. Glenn and his brother, Ken, built an endowment in their parents' honor to support patient care at Madonna as both were impressed by the care their father received when he was a patient.

When Glenn became seriously ill he contacted his close friend, Mary Arth, for advice. He wondered how best to use his wealth to support the ideals he felt were important: education, music, the arts, as well as his college and children. Although he never had children of his own, Glenn wanted to make sure children, especially those with special needs, had everything they needed to

succeed. After several conversations, Mary contacted the Madonna Foundation and helped arrange a legacy endowment in Glenn's name to support the pediatric program at Madonna, focusing on the Therapeutic Learning Center (TLC). After Glenn passed away in 2013, his wishes were fulfilled through the Glenn Korff Pediatric Legacy Fund.



Glenn Korff

"Glenn was intelligent, introspective and generous. He didn't love publicity and wasn't one for accolades," Mary recalls. "He wanted to provide the best he could for others where he saw need."

And Glenn's best has provided so much. Pediatric patients leave Madonna with a 98% return rate to their school. Testing shows these pediatric patients make significant and critical gains in reading and math.

Today, Glenn's gift, along with a generous endowed gift from Donald and Mary Grundman, provides a stable base of funding for the vital program on the Lincoln Campus. Thank you to Glenn for providing our young patients a pathway back to school.



## OMAHA CAMPUS TLC

With the opening of Madonna's Omaha Campus in 2016, the Madonna Foundation has been working to build a similar base of support for TLC in Omaha. Generous donors in the metro area are stepping forward to make TLC a reality in Omaha. Special thanks go to three corporate partners—Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska, CCS Presentation Systems and Cox Communications—whose early support allowed Madonna to launch TLC in Omaha. Inspired by these donations, other donors have contributed significant gifts to help assure student success. We look forward to featuring their stories in an upcoming issue of the Independent.





## BACK TO SCHOOL

A catalyst grant from the WRK Family Foundation launched the Therapeutic Learning Center (TLC) on Madonna's Lincoln Campus in 1999. TLC, also known as "Kit's Academy," in Lincoln, was named in memory of Katherine Anne "Kit" Scott, the daughter and sister of WRK Family Foundation trustees, to honor her love of reading and learning.

Teachers in TLC help Madonna's pediatric patients transition back to their schools. To successfully return to the classroom after a brain or spinal cord injury, pediatric patients need to learn strategies for lost abilities like short-term memory, how to negotiate the classroom in a wheelchair and how to use a communication device.

This service is not financially supported by insurance or school systems, so the Madonna Foundation reached out to generous donors. As demand for services increases, the Madonna Foundation continues to find individual, corporate and foundation donors to support this critical work.

# TLC alumnus pays it FORWARD



Cayden Hubbard attended TLC during his time as a patient at Madonna, helping him to graduate from high school ahead of schedule and realize his academic goals.

Staying motivated for school can be hard for any teenager, but imagine missing school consistently for medical appointments and treatments. Setbacks like these didn't keep 19-year-old Lincoln Southwest High School alumnus Cayden Hubbard from graduating in only three years. Cayden accomplished this impressive feat despite six surgeries and ongoing treatment for a brain tumor, which was diagnosed when he was 6 years old.

Cayden arrived at Madonna's Lincoln Campus following surgery for a brain tumor recurrence. As an inpatient and outpatient, Cayden attended the Therapeutic Learning Center (TLC)-. Cayden's TLC teacher coordinated with his Southwest instructors and worked closely with the teen as he continued coursework online at home in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Grateful for his experience at Madonna, Cayden wanted to give something back. Last December, Cayden made a donation to the Madonna Foundation in thanks for his experiences. His parents also made a generous donation.

"I used to look at [my tumor] as a barrier and something I needed to get past," he said. "But I also look at it as an opportunity."

Through his TLC experience, Cayden learned time management skills and how to complete work independently. Today, Cayden is continuing his education at Southeast Community College-Lincoln, to gain the marketing and business background he needs to be a successful entrepreneur.





## Program overview

# THERAPYPLUS

Madonna TherapyPlus is the outpatient rehabilitation business line of Madonna Rehabilitation Hospitals and consists of four clinic locations across Lincoln and in Omaha. The clinics offer a variety of services ranging from comprehensive rehabilitation for neurological conditions to treatment of sports injuries and orthopedic sprains, strains and post-operative care.

TherapyPlus services at the Lincoln and Omaha campuses specialize in the treatment of patients with complex neurological conditions. In addition to traditional outpatient services, we also offer a comprehensive Rehabilitation Day Program, unique to the region. The high-intensity therapy program focuses on community re-entry, work re-entry and functional-based activities.

Services vary based upon diagnosis and individual patient needs. Our orthopedic teams specialize in work injuries, pre- and post-operative therapy, sports injuries and generalized sprains and strains. These injuries typically require less intensive services. The hands-on care and clinical expertise assists



***The hands-on care and  
our clinical expertise  
assist patients in  
returning to activities  
quickly and safely.***

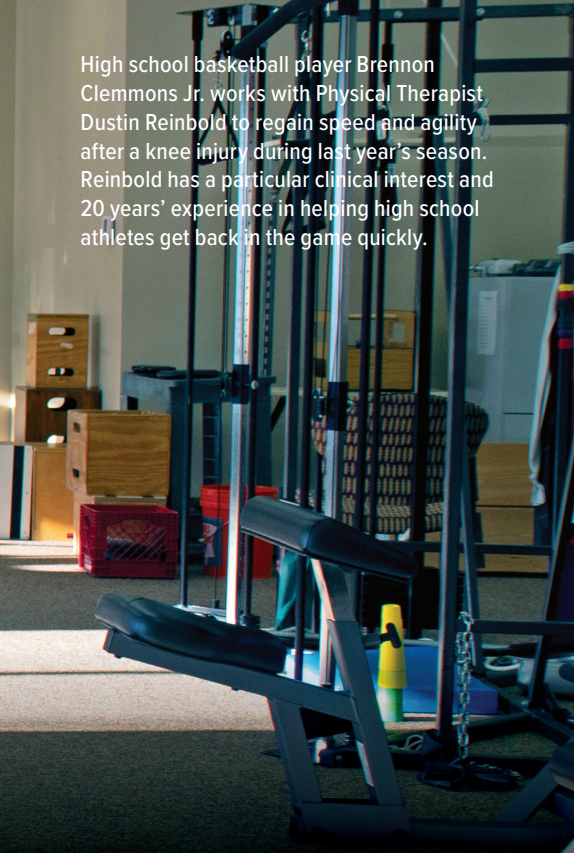
patients in returning to activities quickly and safely.

Occupational health services offered through our Fit for Work program include wellness programs and injury prevention that are core components of TherapyPlus services.

Our commitment to high quality outcomes, patient satisfaction and continual programming advancement are demonstrated by our Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) accreditations. CARF has recognized TherapyPlus for our outpatient medical rehabilitation programs with specialty program accreditation for adult and pediatric brain injury, spinal cord injury



High school basketball player Brennon Clemmons Jr. works with Physical Therapist Dustin Reinbold to regain speed and agility after a knee injury during last year's season. Reinbold has a particular clinical interest and 20 years' experience in helping high school athletes get back in the game quickly.



During 2019, TherapyPlus provided physical, occupational and speech therapy and neuropsychology to more than 5,500 patients from our hospitals and the community with referrals coming from over 1,100 physicians. Patients from 19 states were seen by our expert outpatient team that includes 105 clinicians, of which 38 have earned national certifications in their areas of specialization.

Young athletes in a variety of sports, from gymnastics to football, forge connections with TherapyPlus staff during rehabilitation. Many staff members are former or current athletes who understand the drive to heal and return to competition as quickly as possible.

(Lincoln Campus) and stroke. These specialties enhance the continuum of care for patients and ensure top-notch care for people in our communities to meet ever-changing needs throughout their lifetime.

Each TherapyPlus clinic has a niche focus, but each excels due to our staff expertise, technology, unique programming and services that create positive outcomes and results.

Regardless of the type and complexity of injury, our primary focus is assisting patients with the “what’s next” as they establish a new normal and achieve milestones, previously thought unattainable, during their rehabilitation journey.

Whether it’s helping a child effectively communicate with classmates or an athlete return to the gridiron, our skilled and passionate rehabilitation team uses innovative treatment approaches to help each patient reach his or her goals.



## CONCUSSION CLINIC

A concussion is a mild brain injury caused by either a whiplash type of trauma or a direct blow to the head. Concussion symptoms range from mild to severe and could include headache, nausea, sensitivity to light or difficulty with concentration, and other symptoms. “When concussion symptoms linger, it can affect a person’s ability to work, participate in school, play sports, or enjoy daily and recreational activities,” Julie White, physical therapist, said.”

TherapyPlus offers a Mild TBI clinic at both the Omaha and Lincoln hospital campuses for persons who have sustained a concussion. Depending on the person’s needs, this service may involve a variety of team members, with expertise in treating patients with this complex diagnosis, such as a physiatrist, speech-language pathologist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, neuropsychologist and/or neuro-optometrist. This individualized comprehensive approach is well suited for the person who experiences multiple cognitive, emotional and physical complaints and helps to get people back to work or the activities that they love.



# The healing power of SISTERHOOD

“Always my sister, forever my friend” is a familiar quote Betty Fullenworth takes to heart regarding the incredible love she feels for her three sisters. The Oklahoman suffered a major stroke in December 2019 and leaned on her siblings for strength and perseverance during her recovery journey.

For the past 30 years, Betty’s been living, working and volunteering in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma. A special education teacher, she’s taught hundreds of students during her tenure. But her heart and family remain in northwest Iowa, where she was born and raised. Betty made a 600-mile move early in her career, but retains a tight bond with her younger sisters—Alice, Georgia and Connie. During Christmas break 2019, Betty was visiting

Alice outside of Holstein, Iowa, when she experienced nosebleeds and a headache. Not overly concerned, Alice sounded the alarm when Betty struggled to open her right eye and a bottle of aspirin. She was suffering a major stroke.

Betty spent Christmas at Nebraska Medicine in Omaha, Nebraska, surrounded by family. When rehabilitation became the next step, Madonna’s Omaha Campus was the obvious choice. “My sister, Connie, and brother-in-law, Dean, live in Papillion and I’d heard great things about Madonna,” Betty said.

Initially, Betty’s left side was weak. She struggled with balance, coordination and vision. She spent full



Occupational Therapist Kara Morgan incorporated specialized technology including the Armeo Spring to help improve Betty Fullenworth’s function and range of motion in her left arm and hand. That, along with the help of her three younger sisters and her strong faith, provided support for Betty during her stroke recovery.





Learn more about the Stroke Program at:  
[Madonna.org/Stroke](https://Madonna.org/Stroke)

days in physical, occupational, speech and vision therapy, a sister, sometimes two, by her side. “I struggled with simple tasks like rolling putty with my left hand,” Betty said.

Strong in faith, Betty also found solace in the Bible passage Philippians 4:13: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” Hard work and the support of her sisters has helped Betty flourish. In late January she started Rehabilitation Day Program, Madonna’s intensive outpatient program. Specialized technology like the Bioness Integrated Therapy System, or BITS, is helping restore Betty’s left-peripheral vision. The driving simulator improved her reaction time, visual scanning and perception skills. She also returned to the kitchen.

“We made sure to incorporate home management tasks such as cooking into therapy for meal prep purposes,” said Kara Morgan, occupational therapist.

Through structured group activities with fellow patients Betty gained a new sisterhood of support. “We’re all facing unique challenges, but in the gym and in the hallway, we’re cheering on each other and providing words of encouragement,” Betty said. She continues to engage in outpatient therapy to further refine her skills. Through it all she says her Oklahoma church family, students and neighbors also showered her with regular get well cards and texts. “I’m extremely blessed.”

## COMMUNITY MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION



Cheryl Wendelin, of Lincoln, Nebraska, steadies her walker with assistance from Jason Nieman, Madonna transportation driver, after arriving at her medical appointment.

Since 1990, Madonna’s community medical transportation has provided affordable and accessible transportation for people with disabilities and the elderly. Without reliable transportation, individuals with complex health needs would miss medical appointments. This scenario could result in more emergency room visits or hospitalizations and negatively impact their overall health. “I don’t drive and have appreciated Madonna’s service for over 20 years,” said Cheryl Wendelin, a regular rider. In 2019, Madonna transportation provided 19,331 rides to and from non-emergency medical appointments for people in the community.





# Upgrades and expansion to FAMILY HOUSING



Learn more about Madonna affordable housing at:  
[Madonna.org/Lincoln](https://Madonna.org/Lincoln)



Julie Kiner, a familiar face in Madonna's Admissions department, is the new housing coordinator.

Emotional support during recovery from a serious illness or injury is crucial to optimal patient outcomes. Madonna strongly encourages family and caregiver involvement. However, when confronted with a loved one's extensive rehabilitation, people often face the dilemma of where to stay. Our patient rooms have couches that convert to beds, but an in-room stay is not always feasible.

Since 2001, Madonna has provided affordable housing options, on or near the Lincoln Campus, for families and friends of patients undergoing rehabilitation. The convenience of being within walking distance of the hospital is appealing. Madonna owns 12 residential units located around the campus. The housing is fully-furnished, including kitchens, washers and dryers, off-street parking and many are handicapped accessible.

We are excited to announce Madonna housing options are expanding. A significant overhaul for the existing efficiency units is underway. Two houses will be designated for weekend family visits, allowing for multiple family members to join together under one roof. Historically, there has been a waiting list for the popular on-site housing. Plans are underway to address the concern. "We really want to enhance the family housing experience," Sharon Votava, director of Payor Relations, said.

Renovation of the Woods House, located on the northwest corner of the campus, will add nine additional units. The facility was originally designed in 2000 for younger adults with severe disabilities through a donation from the Woods Charitable Fund and named after Lincoln community leader and benefactor Thomas C. "Chip" Woods III. Following a program restructuring in 2019, the Woods Charitable Fund kicked off the house refurbishing with another generous grant. The





Extensive remodeling of the Woods House will add nine additional units to the Lincoln Campus on-site family housing, including communal kitchen and dining areas, a commercial-sized laundry room and computer workstations.

expansive remodel includes a common area with kitchen and dining space, a business workstation area with computer and internet access, and a laundry room with commercial appliances. Other amenities include a patio and grill and off-street parking. Families staying in other housing units will also have access to these perks. The project is expected to be completed in June.

Julie Kiner, a long-time Madonna employee in the Admissions department, assumes a new role this spring as Madonna housing coordinator. Kiner will be based in the Woods House and manage all the housing units. She'll also wear the hat of social activities planner in coordinating barbeques and other fun networking events to connect patient families. "It's an exciting time and I'm grateful for another opportunity to make a difference and touch lives," Kiner said.

Just like rehabilitation, Madonna understands everyone's housing needs are different. Our goal is to alleviate stress by offering affordable on-site lodging that allows families to focus on uplifting their loved ones throughout the recovery journey.



## PRAISE FOR ON-SITE HOUSING

During an extremely traumatic and life-changing time, the on-site housing was a tremendous relief to me. It was affordable, clean and I always felt safe. Handicapped accessibility was a big plus for my husband when he started the outpatient Rehabilitation Day Program.

**Jamie Alesch - wife of Corey Alesch, stroke survivor  
Remsen, Iowa**

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Choosing Madonna for Chris' rehabilitation after his severely debilitating Guillain-Barré diagnosis wasn't the easiest choice. With four young children at home—seven hours from Madonna—the distance was a sacrifice. We appreciated the convenience of on-site housing, which allowed our family members easy access to the hospital to support my husband.

**Molly Weisgram - wife of Chris Maxwell, GBS survivor  
Fort Pierre, South Dakota**

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Madonna housing was our home for four months. The fully handicapped-accessible unit was an easy transition for my husband during his outpatient therapy. We appreciated the in-room washer and dryer, weekly room service and garbage collection. The housing was perfect for our situation and we'd stay there again in a heartbeat!

**BB Keune - wife of Ardie Keune, TBI survivor  
Sioux Rapids, Iowa**



# Improving lives, providing FIRST HOPE



Occupational Therapists Liz Mizerski (left) and Tabatha Sorenson (right) work with Evy Sayavong to test the First Hope system. Evy is a patient recovering from acute flaccid myelitis, or AFM, at Madonna's Lincoln Campus Specialty Hospital.

As a leader in rehabilitation, Madonna's mission extends beyond improving the lives of our patients. We are committed to enhancing the lives of all people recovering from serious injury or illness regionally and nationally. Madonna's Institute for Rehabilitation Science and Engineering continually innovates rehabilitation systems and technology to address the diverse needs of individuals recovering from catastrophic injury or illness. The Institute's latest technology, called First Hope, will soon be available for individuals at rehabilitation facilities, intensive care units, acute care hospitals, long term care settings and skilled nursing facilities across the globe. It is scheduled for release in 2020.

More than just a name, First Hope provides the essential tools people with limited mobility need to communicate their needs and control their environment from the moment they enter Madonna. The technology harnesses each person's ability—whether it's a sip or puff of air,

a wiggle of a toe or a muscle twitch—and translates it into functional electronic signals empowering them to call a nurse, surf cable channels, dim the lights, adjust window shades and much more.

Achieving greater independence is key to maximizing progress during rehabilitation. Madonna's Research Institute collaborated with patients, clinicians, nurses and other hospital staff to curate the First Hope system's features into a seamless tool that breaks down barriers in environmental control and transcends Madonna into other clinical settings.

Madonna partnered with Curbell Medical, a leading medical device manufacturer, to enhance and commercialize the First Hope system. Curbell's version, the AC20 Assistive Control Adaptor, builds on the First Hope concept. It was designed under FDA guidelines and is UL Listed for safety and operation in health care. Curbell will manufacture and distribute the system.



# ProActive gets a FACELIFT

Madonna ProActive, a medically-based health and fitness center, is receiving a major renovation. The project began in April and will bring new colors, flooring and finishes to the facility based in south Lincoln.

“The upgrade will both complement and enhance our already beautiful facility,” said Samantha Kelly, ProActive’s general manager. “The improvements will only solidify our place as the premier medical fitness facility in the region.”

The redesign complements existing features of ProActive, including the architectural curves of the building and extensive woodwork. Careful planning melds new colors and finishes with existing ones to enhance ProActive’s aesthetically pleasing interior. It’s the most extensive remodel since Madonna ProActive opened in 2006. Virtually every area will be updated with priority given to the most public areas of the facility. The closure of ProActive during COVID-19 is allowing work crews to meet and exceed project milestones.



Madonna peer volunteer Abraham Stubbs (left) fist bumps with fellow SCI survivor Bernardo Hernandez during a visit to the Lincoln Campus.

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE PEER MENTORING

Two years ago, Abraham Stubbs was 21 years old and struggling with feelings of uncertainty as he began the spinal cord injury (SCI) program at the Lincoln Campus. A timely visit from a former patient and fellow SCI survivor made a significant impact on him. It’s why Abraham didn’t hesitate making the three-hour trip from his hometown recently to pay it forward to another Madonna patient.

Madonna’s Peer Volunteer Program matches individuals with disabilities with people who are just starting their recovery. The personal exchange of real-life experiences offers hope after a life-changing illness or injury. On Abraham’s first peer visit, he quickly bonded with Bernardo Hernandez. The two men shared similarities in that they were both construction workers from Iowa and involved in rollover accidents leaving them paralyzed. Abraham is a complete C6-C7 level spinal cord injury while Bernardo is an incomplete spinal cord injury.

Abraham’s fluency in Spanish allowed conversation to flow easily during their two hour visit. The discussion ranged from pursuing outdoor activities to pain management. Out in the parking lot, Abraham demonstrated his specially designed adaptive truck with wheelchair accessibility and hand controls. He encouraged Bernardo to stay positive and explore options in leading a full life. One man’s spirit selflessly lifting another’s on the road to rehabilitation.



## ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED



Ke'Shon Henderson's determination and relentless drive proved inspiring to care team members and patients. This after an accident resulted in a brain injury and the amputation of his right leg. Ke'Shon recovered at the Omaha Campus, utilizing specialized equipment like the Lokomat to regain his ability to walk.

On the front: Spinal cord injury survivor Eric Bartel, of Hillsboro, Kansas, feels the loving embrace of his family, including wife Danielle, their youngest son William, and twins Mason and Logan. Following a car crash in April 2019, Eric leaned on his strong faith and family bonds during his lengthy recovery at the Lincoln Campus.

**Photo courtesy of  
Megan Hein Photography**

At Madonna Rehabilitation Hospitals, we combine heartfelt hospitality with unmatched innovation and education. Our rehabilitation programs are world class. Our clinical expertise, rehabilitation research and state-of-the-art equipment provide the tools to help all patients, even those whose diagnoses pose the most complex challenges. Our investment in exceptional talent, groundbreaking technology and progressive treatments is changing the face of rehabilitation.

Hospital: 402.413.3000  
Admissions: 402.486.8260  
Toll Free: 800.676.5448  
Locations in Omaha & Lincoln

**Madonna.org**

