

# VOLUNTEER news

Hello  
June

June  
2019

A Newsletter for the Shepherd Auxiliary & Volunteers

## Volunteer Spotlight: Clark Jacobs

Who is immersed in academia, completing a degree in mechanical engineering at the Georgia Institute of Technology just a few years after surviving a traumatic brain injury, while also supporting a new non-profit and volunteering at Shepherd Center? Clark Jacobs, that's who!

Clark was born and raised in Kennesaw, Georgia, as the second child and only son of an aeronautical engineer and graphic artist. It was evident to his parents from preschool on that their son saw the world through the eyes of an engineer. By the time Clark was just a junior in high school, he had aced college level Calculus and continued preparing for his future grueling years at Georgia Tech, whose engineering schools are ranked in the top 10 in the nation. After making it through his first year, he moved into his fraternity house. His mother, Mariellen, remembers the first time she saw Clark's lofted bed at the frat house where his mattress sat seven feet off the ground. Her immediate maternal reaction was concern for the fact there were no rails on the bed. She wondered: was she being too protective?

Second semester that same year, Clark woke up one January morning with a very bad headache, and he continued to feel worse. His parents brought him home from campus to recover from what they thought was the flu, but he continued to complain of head and neck pain. He also mentioned his dorm room curtains had inexplicably been lying on the floor when he woke up that day. They came to realize Clark may have fallen out of his loft bed, taking the curtains with him. They took him to the hospital where tests revealed he had a fractured skull which was followed by a brain bleed, emergency surgery and then, a stroke. Two weeks later, he was transferred to Shepherd Center's Disorders of Consciousness program. As he became more alert, slow improvements started to accumulate through therapy. Clark was determined to do his best despite every obstacle. Two months after discharge, he began his acquired brain injury (ABI) day program regimen at Shepherd Pathways, our post-acute brain injury rehabilitation program in Decatur. Three months of hard therapy there took him to another level as he relentlessly pushed through for more function. In 2016, he continued in Beyond Therapy® for six months. Amazingly, just two months later, he re-enrolled at Georgia Tech to complete his goal of earning a degree in mechanical engineering. "Never once through all his therapy has Clark given up, not even once. His attitude is always to put his head down and go," his mother Mariellen shares.



**Above (l-r):** Clark and Mariellen Jacobs meet with a patient's family member to share their story of hope persevering through brain injury, rehabilitation and beyond.



2016 was a big year in the Jacobs family, as they finalized the formation of their 501(c)3 organization, Rail Against The Danger (RAD) -- [railagainstthedanger.org](http://railagainstthedanger.org) -- the embodiment of Mariellen's hard-earned passion for preventing injuries resulting from falling from bunk or loft beds. Clark joined forces with her and attended countless college events, encouraging students and their parents to make the wise choice of putting rails on the high beds. After tirelessly pursuing the University System of Georgia to address this safety issue, Clark and his mother Mariellen are thrilled that starting this fall, each public institution in the University of Georgia System will be required by law to have rails on their lofted beds.

The undaunted determination and perseverance Clark used at Shepherd also serves him well in the extreme challenges of his academic workload as a brain injury survivor, battling persistent fatigue and short-term memory challenges. Despite that day to day hardship, he signed up to volunteer at Shepherd Center in 2017, and his mother joined him not long afterwards. The entire Jacobs family is very grateful for the outstanding care and therapy Clark received here, and deeply appreciates the hope they gained early on from support meetings which were led by our volunteers. Ultimately, Mariellen and Clark decided they wanted to share encouragement that same way. Together they lead on-campus support meetings for the families of current ABI patients through the Brain Injury Peer Visitor Association. They also participate in monthly dinners sponsored by our Peer Support Program where they lead discussions at their respective tables - his table full of survivors, her table full of the family members of survivors. Clark states, "Straight up I like volunteering at Shepherd to give back to a place that did so much for me! I like to tell my story to help other patients and families."

Instead of directing every ounce of his precious limited energy to just himself and his academic career, Clark continues to also carve out time to support RAD and to help and support current Shepherd patients and their families who are just starting their journey. There is no doubt in our minds that Clark inspires countless people not only through volunteering here, but also on his college campus and in the community at large. We are so grateful he is part of our family of volunteers!

# from the AUXILIARY PRESIDENT

Dear Auxiliary Members,

Welcome to summer! Whether you're done teaching for the summer, your kids are out until August or you are just experiencing these Atlanta summer temperatures, it's evident that the season has arrived. The Auxiliary goes on a sort of hiatus during the summer, but that doesn't mean that people aren't working and planning for later in the year.

Thank you to all of those who came to the May Sunshine Committee gathering. They prepared everything for Memorial Day and July 4. We always love to see their projects for the patients! We had a very successful Jewelry Sale and we look forward to the next one with even more great items!

I hope everyone has a fun, safe and sunburn-less summer. We'll see everyone in August at the Summer Soiree!

With a grateful heart,

*Anne*

Anne Worrell

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## Shop and Share coming in September



We are excited that Lilly Pulitzer will be hosting another Shop & Share for the Auxiliary on September 28 with treats, drinks and shopping! A portion of the proceeds will go to our Patient Aid Fund.

## BINGO for Patients and Families!

Come join us for patient BINGO Saturday, August 10 from 2 to 4 p.m. All kinds of prizes needed! Watch your email for the link to sign-up. Please contact Karen Martin ([kjmartin80@bellsouth.net](mailto:kjmartin80@bellsouth.net)) or Jeannie Worlock ([wsingingj@aol.com](mailto:wsingingj@aol.com)) with any questions.



## Summer Soiree coming this August!

Don't miss our 3rd Annual membership party. More details to follow this summer.



## Shepherd Center Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers are always asking how they and/or their family and friends can be more involved at Shepherd Center. Well, your wish is our command! Below is a list of all in-hospital volunteer opportunities that we offer. If you're interested in pursuing a different volunteer role, please contact Alaina Case, volunteer services coordinator, at [Alaina.Case@shepherd.org](mailto:Alaina.Case@shepherd.org) or at (404)350-7316. If you have a family or friend interested in becoming a Shepherd Center volunteer, please direct them to [shepherd.org/volunteer](http://shepherd.org/volunteer) to submit a volunteer application. All volunteer positions are filled on a first come, first served basis. Shepherd would not be able to provide such quality outcomes for our patients if we did not have the support of volunteers!

- **Animal-Assisted Therapy:** Provide volunteer assistance with Cosby's Therapy Animals during animal-assisted therapy sessions. Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.
- **Assistive Technology:** Provide volunteer support for the seating clinic and rehab equipment by cleaning and organizing wheelchairs and their parts, and by transporting wheelchairs to and from departments and patient floors. Weekdays, various times during regular business hours.
- **Coffee Café:** Assist café manager with the operation of the café during designated shifts. The café offers sandwiches, pastries, and beverages. Weekdays, time varies.
- **Family Support Services – Family Driver:** Provide transportation to/from local stores (within three miles of Shepherd Center) in your own vehicle from time to time. Weekdays, various times during regular business hours.
- **Gym Runner:** Assist in gyms during therapy sessions, gather and retrieve necessary equipment and print and distribute patient schedules. Weekdays 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.
- **Horticulture:** Assist horticulture specialist with attending to garden and greenhouse for patient therapy sessions. Weekdays/weekends, time varies.
- **Locomotor Timekeeper:** Assist patients involved in Shepherd Center's body weight supported treadmill training. Weekdays 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1 to 4 p.m.
- **Outpatient Yoga:** Provide demonstrative instruction and assistance to outpatient clients under the training, instruction and supervision of the Yoga teacher. Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.
- **Patient Meals:** Assist patients who need extra assistance at breakfast, lunch and dinner. Weekdays and Saturdays, 7 a.m., 12 p.m., or 4:45 p.m.
- **Patient and/or Family Peer Support (pre-interview required):** PPS: Former patients with ABI, SCI or amputations share their wisdom and experience with new patients. FPS: Provide support for families of patients with brain injuries, spinal cord injuries and amputations as they transition to a new normal. Weekdays and weekends at various times.
- **ProMotion Fitness Buddy:** Aid ProMotion Gym members during workouts or prescribed exercise programs by offering verbal instructions and physical demonstrations of proper equipment set up and usage procedures. Weekdays, various times during regular business hours.
- **Public Relations:** Assist public relations executive assistant with clerical duties to maintain the efficient operation of programs. Weekdays, various times during regular business hours.
- **Materials Management:** Assist with the needs of the materials management staff, such as clerical and/or administrative work. Weekdays, various times during regular business hours.
- **SCI Tutor:** Assist adolescents with their school assignments under the direction of the academic coordinator. Weekdays, various times during regular business hours depending on patient's therapy schedule.
- **Special Events:** Provide hands-on, staff-guided support for activities including holiday parties, sports competitions and other special events. Various times throughout the year.



**Above:** Sandy Kring enjoys seeing patients progress in her volunteer role as a Locomotor Timekeeper.

**Below (l-r):** Stanis McKinney helps patients and staff in his role as an Outpatient Gym Runner.



**Above:** Bryan Durio enjoys supporting other ABI survivors in his role as an ABI Peer Visitor.



# spotlight

**Below (l-r):** Stephanie Tweedy enjoys a brunch sponsored by the Atlanta Marriott Buckhead Hotel and Conference Center, hosted by Mike Mitchell and his staff.



**Left (l-r):** Amy Hicks prepares to enjoy a brunch sponsored by Residence Inn Buckhead, hosted by employees Alexis Thomas and Darius McNair.

**Right:** President of Lift 361, Ed Higdon, (back row, center) and several employees sponsored and served a sub sandwich lunch to our patients and families.



**Right:** Members of the Walton High School SkillsUSA Club prepared 50 bags of cookies to be enjoyed by patients and families.



## Shepherd Center

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Sarah Batts, Executive Director, Shepherd Center Foundation  
Alex Seblatnigg, Director, Volunteer Services & Internal Engagement  
Alaina Case, Volunteer Services Coordinator  
Gale Eckstein, Family Support Services Coordinator  
Newsletter Co-editors: Alaina Case and Gale Eckstein

Membership in the Shepherd Center Auxiliary, Peach Corps, and Junior Committee is open to all volunteers. Members provide ongoing fundraising and volunteer support to Shepherd Center. For more information on becoming a member of one of these groups, contact Alex Seblatnigg at (404) 350-7315 or visit [www.shepherd.org](http://www.shepherd.org).

Shepherd Center's mission is to help people with a temporary or permanent disability caused by injury or disease rebuild their lives with hope, independence, and dignity, advocating for their full inclusion in all aspects of community life while promoting safety and injury prevention.