

# VOLUNTEER

## news



February  
2020

A Newsletter for the Shepherd Auxiliary & Volunteers

### Volunteer Spotlight: Liz Bell

Reaching a 10-year anniversary is a special occasion – especially as a volunteer at Shepherd Center, because it demonstrates a deep and long-lasting commitment to the patients and families of our world-class facility. Liz Bell has achieved that milestone with humility while showing in a very concrete way that the traumatic brain injury she sustained in her 30s does not limit her passion to help other families who have been affected by such an injury.

Born and raised in Shaker Heights, Ohio, as the middle child of an attorney and mother and volunteer, Liz's first love has always been horses. By the age of nine, she was riding regularly and went on to compete with her hunter/jumper horse for many years. As an early adolescent, Liz became a summer camper at Brown Ledge Camp in Vermont, which led to a connection with that camp that lasted many years. Spending her summers there just whetted her appetite for more, and in college she became a senior counselor and riding instructor. After graduating from the University of Wisconsin, majoring in journalism/advertising, she moved to Atlanta and went to work in the restaurant business, eventually directing operations for Lettuce Soup Surprise. When the chain was sold, she moved back to Ohio and was hired as development director at the same camp, working from home. She was able to raise funds for her beloved camp for years, while managing their riding program in the summer.

In 1998, Liz was on her way to the barn in the wee hours of the morning to braid the manes of some horses before a competition when she apparently lost control of her car and crashed just 100 yards from her destination. After days in the ICU and weeks in rehab at the Cleveland Clinic, she moved back in with her parents for care and support. She also used a neuropsychologist in her continued recovery. After more than a year, she moved into her own residence, but her parents were very grateful she kept her office at their home so they could see her each day. That transition to more independent living revealed to Liz that in some ways she was not functioning the same after her brain injury. She struggled with cognitive fatigue, filtering ambient noises, retention of what she read, multitasking and being flexible about changes in her day. She clearly remembers that when she moved back to Atlanta eight years after her accident, and it was a celebration for her when she went alone to renew her driver's license, not needing a family member or friend with her to help navigate the different steps in that process. Learning to adapt to life post-injury was a long road.

In 2008, Liz connected with Ann Boriskie, director of the Brain Injury Peer Visitor Association, who coordinates sending volunteers to support brain injury patients and family members in several hospitals in Atlanta and north Georgia, including Shepherd Center. Liz already had the passion in her heart to assist that population and chose Shepherd Center as the site to serve. The next year, she joined a more experienced volunteer here, Tom Leahy. To this day, they partner to lead support groups for families on an acquired brain injury (ABI) unit. She loves having the opportunity to give the family members of our ABI patients hope about what the future will hold, and encourages them to start taking care of themselves and accept help offered from friends and others. "I tell them if they don't get rest, then when they really need their strength, it won't be there."

Despite still having daily struggles with the effects of her brain injury, Liz has developed a life full of work, service to her community and even romance. Liz is getting married for the first time this spring! During her time at Shepherd each month, she is vitalized by the atmosphere and states, "The energy that this hospital has inside its walls is incredible! People on staff smile, are helpful and kind, and I can see the effects of that on the caregivers that I support – they are so grateful for it." Undoubtedly those same families are grateful for Liz, who comes alongside them during the most difficult time of their lives with the assurance that there will still be joy in life. Thank you, Liz, for a decade of faithful service!



**Above:** Liz Bell enjoys connecting and relating with patients and families while volunteering as an ABI Peer Visitor at Shepherd Center.

# from the AUXILIARY PRESIDENT

Dear Auxiliary Members,

February, the month of love! Love is all around us. Love between a couple, parents and children and friends. It can also be about the love you have for your community, your workplace or where you give your time, talent and treasures. I love Shepherd Center! I loved it as an employee, as part of my "village" and where I LOVE to give in any way I can. Let's all give a little more love this year; the patients and families will all surely benefit from extra love. We have several events coming up this spring where you can help spread the love. I hope you will join us.

With a grateful heart,

*Anne*

Anne Worrell

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## Valentine's Bake Sale

Join us at our annual Valentine's Bake Sale on Friday, February 14 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the hallway of the Marcus-Woodruff Building, next to the Apothecary. Bakers and volunteers are appreciated. The Valentine's Bake Sale offers a delicious array of tasty treats. Contact Lois Puckett (queenevry@gmail.com) with questions.



## Sunshine Committee



Come spread  
LOVE with the Sunshine Committee.  
Saturday, February 8  
10 a.m.  
6th floor classrooms

Please contact Karen Martin at [kjmartin80@bellsouth.net](mailto:kjmartin80@bellsouth.net) or Jeannie Worlock at [wsingingj@aol.com](mailto:wsingingj@aol.com) with any questions.



Join us for Bingo!  
Saturday, February 29  
2 to 4 p.m.  
Callaway Auditorium  
Everyone Wins!



# Shepherd Center Neuropsychologist Talks About Making a Career Out of Helping People

*Written By Sara Baxter*

Greg Brown, Psy.D., has had several different jobs throughout his career, but they've all had one thing in common: helping people. He started in his hometown of Alto, Georgia, working as a paramedic. Feeling he needed a change, he moved to Atlanta and became a research coordinator, before ultimately returning to school to study neuropsychology. Since 2018, he's been working at Shepherd Center as a neuropsychologist with the SHARE Military Initiative, as well as the Complex Concussion Clinic.

## **Q: What exactly is a neuropsychologist?**

At the core, we are clinical psychologists but as neuropsychologists, we specialize in understanding brain-behavior relationships. Our training goes further in understanding how the brain works, and what it means cognitively, emotionally and behaviorally in the presence of neurological illness and injury. Our primary role is assessment and testing of cognitive function. We can evaluate patients post-injury/illness, look at their function – such as memory, problem-solving skills, attention and language – and identify deficits and form a plan to address those deficits.

## **Q: How did you get interested in the field of neuropsychology?**

This is really a second career for me. After spending 11 years as a paramedic, I relocated to Atlanta and worked with a psychiatrist as a research coordinator. That's when I became interested in brain health. I realized I wanted to be part of the patient's care team. Given my medical background, neuropsychology seemed to be a good fit.

## **Q: What is it like working with SHARE clients?**

It is an amazing experience. There is a challenge with the complexity of their history and injuries, but I like that challenge. I follow them from the beginning of their treatment at SHARE through discharge, and I love seeing them at their graduation ceremony – celebrating the progress they've made and all they've accomplished. I always feel as though they leave with a new sense of hope, and in the end, I receive hope as well. It's infectious and it motivates me every day.

## **Q: What is your favorite part of the job?**

I wake up every morning and look forward to coming to work. I am surrounded by a great group of people in this area of expertise. I learn something new every day. I think it is the collective group of us that make a difference in our patients' lives. I get to be part of something bigger that is life-changing for those we serve.

## **Q: Can you tell us some of the exciting things happening in your department?**

The Department of Psychology and Neuropsychology has been growing to keep up with the service demands in all of the programs at Shepherd Center. We recently welcomed new staff on the ABI and SCI units, SHARE, and we are looking for more talent to join our team at Pathways. A number of our staff have been here a long time – Dr. Jill Koval celebrates her 30th anniversary this year, and Dr. Gary James just celebrated his 15th anniversary. Our goal is to meet the patient and family needs across all of our clinics and programs.

As for me, I have been seeing patients in both SHARE and the Complex Concussion Clinic. Each program is growing rapidly and it has been great to be a part of both. With the addition of our new rehabilitation psychologist in SHARE, I will be shifting more of my attention to the Complex Concussion Clinic. However, I get to remain a part of SHARE in a consulting role.



**Above:** Gregory Brown, Psy.D., is a neuropsychologist with the SHARE Military Initiative and Complex Concussion Clinic.



# spotlight



**Above (l-r):** Hyatt Place Buckhead employees Skyler McClellan and Catarina Munn serve Victoria Moore and Tiffany Payne at a brunch sponsored by the hotel.



**Above (l-r):** Lakia Jones prepares to be served by BCA Properties employees Nic Brooks and Alex Koons at a brunch sponsored by their employer.



## Shepherd Center

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## VOLUNTEER news

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.