

COURAGE KENNY REHABILITATION INSTITUTE™

Onward

SPRING 2015

A newsletter from
COURAGE KENNY FOUNDATION
for friends of COURAGE KENNY
REHABILITATION INSTITUTE, which
is the merged Courage Center and
Sister Kenny Rehabilitation Institute.

2015 is off to an exciting start at Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute!

We are growing and remodeling in multiple locations thanks to generous contributors like YOU. Plans are in the works to renovate the St. Croix campus as well as parts of the Golden Valley campus. These improvements will enhance the experience for clients and patients that we serve annually and will also prepare us to serve even more clients in the future. We are excited to increase our capacity!

Inside this issue, you'll read more about client Libby Backberg and why she's looking forward to the remodel expected this year at our St. Croix location. You'll also learn how Chad Walker is taking what he learned from the Adaptive Ski and Snowboard program into his duties as a ski patrol, plus other organizational highlights and upcoming events.

Thank you for continuing to help us make 2015 an exceptional year at Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute.

Allina Health 

**COURAGE KENNY
REHABILITATION
INSTITUTE™**



Libby Backberg has used Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute-St. Croix services for 25 years.

A message from Jan Malcolm

I hope you are enjoying the last of our winter and looking forward to spring.

Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute has big plans for 2015. Building off of our strong momentum from 2014, the breadth and depth of our services will continue to grow. We are investing in innovative programs and specialized training for our staff, and will continue to document the effectiveness of new treatments and care models through research. Understanding the effectiveness of our work helps determine where we expand and grow.

Inside this publication, you will learn more about the plans we have for Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute – St Croix. Our Stillwater facility is growing and improving to better serve our clients and prepare for growth. We are thrilled to see these plans come to fruition with the generosity of our friends and partners in the St. Croix Valley.

We continue on the path to becoming the destination center for rehabilitation in the region, and with hard work, we will serve as a national model of what can be for people with disabilities.

None of this could happen without friends like you who give so generously—of time and skills as volunteers, and in financial support to fund the services that keep patients, clients and families thriving. We hope you feel great pride in what you make possible. We certainly do, and thank you!

Thank you!

Jan Malcolm
President, Courage Kenny Foundation
Vice President, Public Affairs, Allina Health



Vocational Services celebrates 30 Years!

In 1985, the former Courage Center, now Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute, began offering vocational counseling and job placement services to people with disabilities. Sister Kenny Rehabilitation Institute also offered vocational evaluation, counseling and placement services through the 1990s.



Ted Lizner participated in job shadowing through Vocational Services.

Thirty years later, our Vocational Services Department works with almost 300 people a year. Our employment and job retention services focus on an individual's interests and abilities. Staff members also work with a variety of local employers and community organizations to assist people in finding and keeping a job.

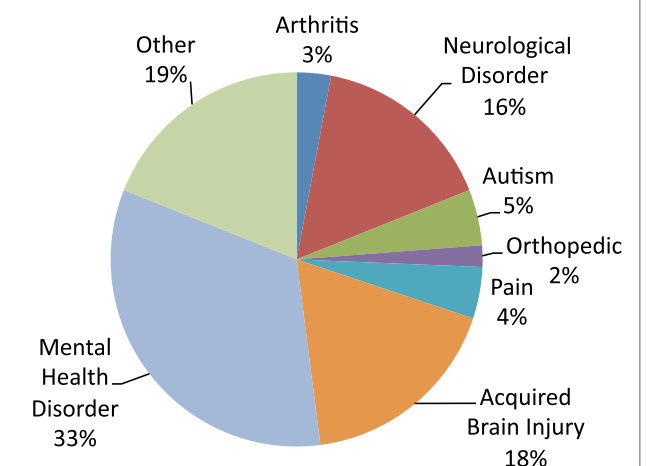
For more information, contact the department's service coordinator at 612-775-2569 or CKRIVocationalServices@allina.com

We are grateful to Ameriprise Financial, Cummins Power Generation, G&K Services Foundation, Otto Bremer Foundation and RBC Wealth Management for their generous support of Vocational Services. We also thank the many individuals who graciously supported Vocational Services through their financial contributions, service on the Business Advisory Committee and volunteer support as mentors.

Did you know?

- A report by the Department of Employment and Economic Development showed that for every \$1 investment into vocational rehabilitation services in 2013, there was an \$8.9 return on investment in Minnesota's economy through wages earned by program participants.
- Studies have shown that people who have a job have better mental health and are more social. When people with disabilities are employed, the entire community benefits and societal views of the abilities of people with disabilities evolve.
- Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute is a nationally recognized resource in assistive technology solutions to assist people in finding and keeping a job.

Diagnoses Served by Vocational Services



Libby Backberg: Moving forward and giving back

For 28-year-old Libby Backberg, living with cerebral palsy isn't about limitations. It's about reaching goals, sustaining momentum and expanding horizons.

During the last 25 years, Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute has helped her do just that.

It all started when Libby was 3 and began working with therapists at Courage Center St. Croix. She had developmental delays due to her premature birth and cerebral palsy. With intensive physical and occupational therapy, she learned to walk and began eating food by mouth for the first time when she was 5.

But Libby doesn't dwell on the hard work that was involved; it's the people who helped her that both she and her parents recall vividly.

"A big part of what Courage offered was the welcoming, friendly environment. To see how they looked forward to seeing her as much as she looked forward to seeing them meant so much to us," said Cindy Backberg, Libby's mother.

The Backbergs' close ties to the Institute have given them a deep appreciation for the organization. Giving back has become a family affair. Bruce Backberg, Libby's dad, serves on the board of directors, and Cindy is a lead volunteer for the Encourage Breakfast, the annual fundraiser for Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute – St. Croix. Libby has also pitched in by sharing her experiences with donors and community groups.

"When you walk through those doors, it's almost like a second home," said Bruce Backberg. "It's an honor to give back for the benefit we have received over the years."



Above: Cindy, Libby and Bruce Backberg
Right: A therapy session with Libby at a much younger age.

As Libby got older, her needs evolved, but Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute remained an important part of her life. She was introduced to horseback riding through Courage Riders when she was 7, and then took up the sport on her own. It has made a difference in maintaining her mobility – the heat of the horse's body combined with constant motion of its gait helps reduce muscle spasticity.



After orthopedic surgery when she 12, she returned for intensive physical therapy to aid in recovery from surgery and regain her ability to walk. She also participated in recreational swimming and remains a regular participant in Team Fitness.

Physical therapist Barb Diederichs began working with Libby right from the start. "For kids with disabilities, we're here to support families as their priorities change,"

Diederichs explained. "Whenever they hit a bump in the road or wonder what's next, we can help them see the possibilities. We may not necessarily provide all the services, but we help them make connections and open their eyes to all that they can do."

That's how Libby sees it, too. "Without Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute, I would not be where I am today," she said.

Expanding resources for a healthier St. Croix community



In October 1988, Courage Center opened a second rehabilitation therapy location in the St. Croix Valley. Known then as Courage St. Croix, the highlight of the opening was the new warm-water therapy pool. The project had so much community support that more than 1,500 people attended the opening.

Today, Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute – St. Croix serves 3,500 clients a year in two Stillwater locations. In 2012, pediatric services moved to the new Early Childhood Family Center. In the main Stillwater location, the

pool is still popular for people of all ages and abilities, but now people also come to work out in the accessible fitness center or to do physical, occupational or speech therapy.

Twenty seven years later, the needs of the community and clients have increased and growth in services is needed to meet those needs. This year, a \$1.2 million renovation project at Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute - St. Croix will enhance the rehabilitation experience for clients and prepare for anticipated growth.



The project plans call for:

More therapy treatment space

Space formerly used for pediatric services will be remodeled for additional treatment space with expanded services for physicians

and providers of Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Associates, the Institute's provider practice.

An expanded fitness center

An open design will improve flow from physical therapy to the fitness center and allow space for more work out equipment. The project will add bariatric parallel bars and a ceiling track lift system. It will also improve flow around equipment, making it easier for people to use and safer for wheelchair users to navigate.

A conference and education center

This new space can be used for client care conferences, support group meetings, staff education and community gatherings. In addition,

yoga and exercise classes, which are now being held at another location because of limited space, can move back to the St. Croix campus.

Enhanced entrance, reception area and client comfort

Improvements will enhance client comfort, confidentiality and registration services and help us serve our client in the best possible way.

If you'd like to learn more about the renovation of this vital St. Croix community resource or are interested in contributing to the project, contact Megan Muske at 612-775-2104.

Chad Walker: A need for speed fuels passion for monoskiing

Chad Walker likes to go fast. That was true before a spinal cord injury left him partially paralyzed nearly 16 years ago, and it's still true today. In fact, it has led to a passion for skiing and a recent honor: Earlier this year, he became the first adaptive skier in the central division of the National Ski Patrol.

Walker, who was injured as a passenger in a car accident, began to get a reputation for going fast while hospitalized at Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute at Abbott Northwestern Hospital soon after his accident. "I had an ultralight titanium wheelchair built and people started calling me Highspeed," said Walker. "I was known for doing wheelies in the hall. I figured if I was going to be in a wheelchair, I might as well be good at it."



Perfecting his wheelchair skills was only the beginning of Walker's efforts to regain the active life he led before his accident. In 2006, he discovered the Ski & Snowboard Program offered by Courage Center. (Courage Center merged with Sister Kenny Rehabilitation Institute in 2013 to become Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute). He was so taken with the sport that he signed up for weekly monoski lessons through the program at both Hyland Park in Bloomington and Spirit Mountain in Duluth. Monoskiers use a single ski with a bucket seat, along with outriggers for stability and control.

"I had incredible volunteer instructors at both places," said Walker. In addition to helping him learn the skills needed for the sport, Walker explained that the instructors kept him motivated with their

enthusiasm and passion. "You need persistence with this sport because it is difficult to learn," he said.

By the end of his first season, Walker could get on and off the chairlift and get up from a fall independently.

Before long, Walker had purchased his own equipment. He attended monoski camps hosted by Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute and the Disabled Vets and also attended camps in Colorado. "That really increased my learning curve," Walker said. Then he began adaptive ski racing and eventually joined an able-bodied ski racing team.

He raced on the able-bodied team for one season before deciding to channel his energy into ski instruction. During the off-season, he also took up a new sport through the Institute's Sports and Recreation department: hand cycling. That led to another major life change.

"I met the love of my life on the bike trail, another hand cyclist who eventually became my wife," said Walker.

Through his work with other volunteer ski instructors, Walker was introduced to the idea of joining the National Ski Patrol, an organization dedicated to safety, emergency care and rescue on the slopes. He was accepted into the program, completed the training and passed all of the requirements.

Walker said that being a volunteer ski instructor and a member of the National Ski Patrol is his way of thanking those who helped him get involved with the sport. "When I was starting eight years ago, many people gave so much of their time and talent. I want to pay that forward. It's a way to pass it on to the next generation of skiers."

For Walker, skiing is more than an enjoyable pastime. It represents independence and freedom. "With alpine skiing, there is no difference between me and an able-bodied skier. I can explore any trail, chute or bowl, and I can go fast. Of course, I also respond to the adrenaline. That makes me smile and gets me fired up – there are no limits."

Watch for our new wheels!

Donations make life easier for sports and recreation participants

Each year, almost 700 people participate in community-based, adapted sports and recreation activities through Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute. Hundreds of volunteers help make these fun activities possible.

This past fall, donors helped make a long-time wish come true for participants, staff and volunteers by providing the funding for a new truck and trailer used to transport sports equipment used by participants to various venues in the Twin Cities and Duluth/Superior.

The inside of the trailer is customized to safely and efficiently store precious cargo like sports wheelchairs, adapted ski equipment, handcycles and more. The outside of the trailer includes photos of participants having fun in a variety of our seasonal activities.



Bridging Together

Spinal cord injury conference

For Professionals
Friday, May 29 – Saturday, May 30, 2015

For Consumers and Caregivers
Saturday, May 30, 2015

Location: Allina Health Commons, Pettingill Hall

Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute and the Courage Kenny Grad School are bringing together people with spinal cord injuries and professionals who care for them. Our goal is to bridge the opportunity for optimal care, health and wellness for people with spinal cord injuries or disorders through lectures, panel discussions and exhibits.

For more information contact Lisa Mengelkoch,
612-863-7306.



Join Us at a 2015 Benefit Event

Our 2015 events will benefit programs and services of Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute. We welcome you as an individual attendee or an event sponsor. Visit allinahealth.org/ckfoundation for more information.

Encourage Breakfast

Tuesday, May 19, 8 – 9 a.m.
Prom Center, Oakdale, Minn.

A breakfast event that celebrates children and adults with disabilities who receive services at Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute – St. Croix. Proceeds benefit clients and services in the St. Croix Valley.



Save the date – May 19, 2015 – for the 2015 Encourage Breakfast!



Celebration of Courage

Tuesday, June 16, 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Target Field, Minneapolis

Join us for a fun, inspiring one-hour lunch celebrating quality of life for people with episodic and/or permanent disabling conditions through innovation, research and advocacy.

Save the date – June 16, 2015 – for the next Celebration of Courage!

Courage Kenny Golf Challenge

presented by ABRA Auto Body and Glass
Monday, Aug. 31, 11:30 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Hazeltine National Golf Club, Chaska, Minn.

Join us for a great day of golf while supporting sports and recreation activities at Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute.



Save the date – August 31, 2015 – for the Courage Kenny Golf Challenge!



Shoot for Fun

presented by National Bank of Commerce

Saturday, Sept. 12, 8 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Old Vermilion Trail, Duluth

One of the largest sporting clay events in the Midwest, drawing 450 avid hunting and sporting clay enthusiasts. Proceeds benefit adapted sports and recreation in northeastern Minnesota and northwestern Wisconsin.

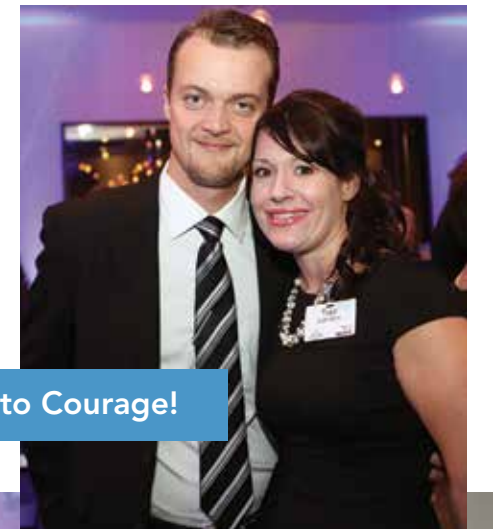
Save the Date – September 12, 2015 – for the 2015 Shoot for Fun

A Toast to Courage Gala

Saturday, Nov. 7, 6 - 11 p.m.
Radisson Blu Mall of America, Bloomington, Minn.

A gala featuring gourmet food and wine, silent and live auctions, and live music, benefiting Institute clients and services.

Save the date – November 7, 2015 – for the next A Toast to Courage!





Blue Roan Run, by Elizabeth Sullivan, is one of this year's featured pieces in the Art Show and Sale.

The 52nd Annual ART OF Possibilities ART SHOW & SALE

Art of Possibilities, formerly known as the Courage Kenny International Art Show, is now in its 52nd year. The annual event, presented by Smead Manufacturing Company in 2015, has grown from a forum for people with disabilities to sell their artwork to a major showcase of fine art. It is also one of only a handful of juried art shows in the world featuring artists with physical or mental impairments.

New this year is an online application process and a move to Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute – Golden Valley

where the show will run from April 30 – May 22, 2015. An opening reception, free to the public, is set for Thursday, April 30, from 5:30 – 8 p.m. Come check out beautiful artwork and support artists with disabilities.

For more information, contact Laura Brooks, 612-775-2507, laura.brooks@allina.com.



Committee members have been instrumental in bringing the best of the former Sister Kenny International Art Show into the new Art of Possibilities Art Show and Sale. Pictured, left to right: Margaret Dawson, retired social worker; Annie Metzger, community volunteer; Kelly Buttler, manager, In-kind Giving, Courage Kenny Foundation; Gail Speckmann, artist; and Laura Brooks, program coordinator, Courage Kenny Foundation. Not pictured: Jenny Peterson, artist.

2014 Jacobson Memorial Award recipients honored

Two young people with disabilities were recipients of the 2014 Judd Jacobson Memorial Award which honors exceptional entrepreneurs who also have a disability.

Joshua Straub, 24, Plymouth, Minn., who was born with cerebral palsy, is an avid gamer. In August 2012, Straub formed DAGERS (Disabled Accessibility for Gaming Entertainment Rating System). The company's mission seeks to ensure game accessibility for people with disabilities. DAGERS was developed due to the frustrating experiences Josh had with games that were not accessible for people with disabilities.

DAGERS was originally created as a service to provide information to determine if a game was accessible to a player's particular needs prior to purchasing it. DAGERS also provides reviews on particular games, and articles that address larger issues related to game accessibility.

Straub plans to use the award money to recreate his website and begin the second phase of his business which will be to contract with video game manufacturers to test products for accessibility.

Jenn Schmidt, 29, Minneapolis, was three-years-old when diagnosed with bilateral sensorineural hearing loss. She wears hearing aids in both ears. Schmidt has been a makeup artist since she was able to hold brushes in her hands. After high school she attended college, but her passion for makeup was rekindled during a Mary Kay party. Selling Mary Kay and demonstrating makeup applications for people who were scared or unsure of makeup convinced Schmidt to follow her passion for makeup as a career.



2014 Jacobson Award recipients Joshua Straub and Jenn Schmidt (standing), with Barbara Jacobson, the wife of the late Judd Jacobson.

Schmidt graduated in 2011 with a cosmetology license from the Aveda Institute in Minneapolis. During her time as a student she auditioned for, and was accepted into, the Aveda Freelance Advisors various salons as a professional makeup artist to assist with events. For the past two years she has

devoted all of her extra time to her company All by Jenn.

She plans to use the award money to help secure more clients through advertising and marketing, additional training and to kick start savings for a company vehicle.

The Judd Jacobson Memorial Award

The Judd Jacobson Memorial Award is named for the late Owatonna, Minn., business leader and entrepreneur who became a quadriplegic as a result of a diving accident. The \$5,000 cash award is administered by Courage Kenny Foundation, with funds made possible by Daniel J. Gainey, a lifelong friend of Jacobson's.



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