

Onward

WINTER 2019

A newsletter from
COURAGE KENNY FOUNDATION
for friends of COURAGE KENNY
REHABILITATION INSTITUTE.



David Gehrke works with physical therapists in his weekly *Big and Loud* class for people with Parkinson's disease. Read about Gehrke's progress on page 3.

The lifelong impact of your generosity

As we near the end of another inspiring year of service, we are thankful. We are thankful for the employees, volunteers and clients who give so much to this community. And we are thankful for you. Your contributions throughout the year and in this holiday season make life-changing rehabilitation and community programs possible.

Your support allows our clients to pursue healthy and independent lives no matter what brought them through our doors. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to this work.

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Allina Health

**COURAGE KENNY
FOUNDATION**

A Generous Spirit

Dear friends,

As 2019 comes to a close, the generous spirit of our community is all around us. Generosity is what founded this organization in 1928 when a group of citizens came together to serve their fellow community members with disabilities. This generous spirit, 91 years later, is still the heart of Courage Kenny. In this edition of Onward, you'll find inspiring stories of generosity from every corner of our community.

In this issue, read about a legacy of generosity that will support ABLE (Activity Based Locomotor Exercise) clients for years to come. Discover how our employees show generosity toward each other through the Employee Giving Campaign and read about the nine recipients of the MacDonald Distinguished Employee Awards. Finally, as always, enjoy some inspiring stories about those touched by our programs and services. Our clients make important contributions to our community by bringing positive attitudes, strong work ethics and encouragement for each other.

The generous spirit that sparked the beginning of this community has continued to grow each year. It is amazing to see where that generosity has already taken us, and it is even more exciting to think what we can do together in the future.

Thank you for keeping the generous spirit alive for so many years and for the impact you make in the lives of our clients.

All the best to you and your loved ones this holiday season.



Stephen Bariteau
President, Courage Kenny Foundation



*Stephen Bariteau, president,
Courage Kenny Foundation*

David Gerke: Learning to be “Big and Loud” with Parkinson's

David Gehrke has had Parkinson's disease for more than 23 years. The previously active Gehrke had a difficult time losing his ability to do so many of the physical activities that he loves. Thanks to participation in the Lee Silverman Voice Treatment (LSVT) Big and Loud program at Courage Kenny St. Croix, he has been able to resume some everyday activities that previously felt impossible.

Gehrke has been active his whole life. He coached high school football and hockey, and his hobbies included skiing, sailing, golfing and even sky diving. Not being able to do activities that brought him so much joy was extremely difficult, and he began to struggle with depression.

As his Parkinson's progressed, Gehrke's movements became slower and smaller, and his speech became slower and softer. To control his tremors, Gehrke and his doctor first tried medication. When his symptoms persisted, his doctor told him about LSVT Big and Loud therapy at Courage Kenny St. Croix.

LSVT is an intensive therapy program that has been proven to help people with Parkinson's disease move and speak better. In LSVT Big, clients work with physical therapists on a variety of exercises to improve everyday motor skills like walking, balancing and handwriting. LSVT Loud therapy works on a series of vocal exercises with speech therapists.

Gehrke began to see some real improvements soon after starting the intensive LSVT Big and Loud program. In one therapy session, he felt so good that he was motivated to run for the first time in years, so he took off on foot without telling his therapist. She jumped right up and ran alongside him to ensure his safety. This episode, he says, was a testament to the observation skills and commitment of his therapists.

After 16 weeks in the intensive program, Gehrke says he has the strength and tools to perform everyday tasks that were difficult before the therapy. He is hardly shaking anymore. “Sometimes my right leg shakes, but that just makes me a better dancer,” he laughed.



Gehrke practices big movement and vocal exercises in Big and Loud.



Gehrke works on motor skills for household tasks like folding laundry.



Big and Loud follow-up class at Courage Kenny St. Croix

Gehrke continues Big and Loud follow-up classes on Fridays and has the highest praise for his dedicated therapists. Maintaining his mental and physical health is an ongoing project, Gehrke says, but he continues to make it a priority. “Every day is a gift,” he adds.

Arthur Andersen Minneapolis Alumni: *Securing a legacy*

The Arthur Andersen Minneapolis Alumni have long been supporters of Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute, but in 2017, they established a more lasting investment in the future of adaptive fitness that is making a significant impact on the health and well-being of our clients.

In 2002, Jack Jasper and Jerry Schwalbach formed a group of former Minneapolis employees of the accounting firm, Arthur Andersen LLP. The group has 200 to 300 active supporters, and each year more than 100 members gather for a golf and social event benefiting Courage Kenny. Many members have family and friends who have benefited from Courage Kenny services so the group has a strong commitment to providing opportunities for people with disabilities.

In 2017, Jasper and Steve Polacek, Arthur Andersen Minneapolis Alumni leaders, looked to establish a lasting impact of the group's generosity. At the time, Courage Kenny was in the process of remodeling and expanding the adaptive fitness center in Golden Valley. The Arthur Andersen Minneapolis Alumni generously partnered on the expansion that is now known as the Arthur Andersen Minneapolis Alumni Fitness and Wellness Center, which opened in June 2017.

Helping Courage Kenny build a beautiful, state-of-the-art adaptive fitness center was only the beginning. The Arthur Andersen Minneapolis Alumni wanted to increase access to the facility by ensuring people would not face financial barriers to using it.



Jack Jasper (far right) and Steve Polacek (far left) with scholarship recipient, Dianna Skoglund and her husband, Jim Skoglund

The new fitness center is home to the Courage Kenny Activity Based Locomotor Exercise (ABLE) program, which effectively increases health and independence in people with a spinal cord injury or other neurological conditions. Though proven effective, ABLE is staff-intensive, can be expensive and is often not covered by insurance. To provide clients greater access to the new fitness center and the ABLE program, the Arthur Andersen Minneapolis Alumni established a grant fund that will provide ABLE scholarships for years to come. This fall, the first scholarships from this grant fund were awarded, totaling more than \$20,000.

One of these first scholarship recipients is Dianna Skoglund. Skoglund has been in intensive

recovery after surviving a severe brain bleed and a coma caused by a rare form of leukemia. Skoglund has come a long way in those two years. She says she likes how intensive ABLE is, and she thinks the pace has accelerated her recovery. Even though it's hard work, Skoglund said, "I actually have fun coming here."

Her husband agreed, "When we don't come we miss it."

We are incredibly thankful to the Alumni for the relationships, culture and values fostered at Arthur Andersen through periodic social and charitable activities. Their support for Courage Kenny is an illustration of that commitment. The Arthur Andersen Minneapolis Alumni legacy continues.

Remodeling at United Hospital: *Improving patient care*

Patient care just got a boost at United Hospital in St. Paul with the remodeling of the Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute unit on the sixth floor. The \$1.1 million renovation began in April 2019 and when completed by year's end, will feature:

- Sixteen private patient rooms
- Improved bathroom accessibility in patient rooms
- A new occupational health kitchen in one of the therapy gyms (pictured right)
- Two new therapy gyms (pictured right)
- Two private treatment rooms for speech therapy

“The changes are being made to improve privacy, access and overall patient satisfaction,” said Joshua Tanner, manager of rehabilitation services at Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute at United Hospital. “In the past we have had access issues and have had to turn patients away. In addition patients had to double up in rooms, which isn't ideal for privacy or healing.”

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“This project is more than just a facelift.
It really is about patient access and care.”
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And because the therapy gym was located on a different floor than the hospital's inpatient rooms, patients would have to be transferred for their functional therapy. Now they are only steps away from the gym.

“This project is more than just a facelift,” said Tanner. “It really is about patient access and care.”

The remodeling project has received funding through donations to the United Hospital Foundation, while donations to the Courage Kenny Foundation are dedicated for new equipment for the unit.



We Give

EMPLOYEE GIVING CAMPAIGN

Allina Health employees show their generosity

Allina Health employees are generous in countless ways. The annual Employee Giving Campaign each October provides an opportunity for all Allina employees to donate to Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute, another Allina Health program or other favorite nonprofit organizations. Employee charitable giving helps Allina Health serve patients and communities in new, innovative ways.

Each year a fund is selected to highlight during the campaign. In 2019, for the second year, the spotlight fund was Caring for Colleagues, a fund that ensures our coworkers feel supported during life's difficult times. The fund illustrates Allina Health's commitment to caring for the whole person.

The Caring for Colleagues fund supports employees dealing with financial hardship due to unavoidable emergencies. One employee who received assistance last year said, "I want to thank you.

We have been going through some hard times financially, mentally and physically. This comes from the bottom of our hearts. It has helped lower our stress level. Thank you so much for caring for your co-workers. I am glad to be an Allina Health employee."

At Courage Kenny, the foundation has a memorable annual tradition of holding the Employee Giving Campaign Duck Race, where employees purchase plastic ducks and float them down the creek on the Golden Valley campus. Other Allina locations have creative ways to engage employees and raise funds toward the campaign like silent auctions, pin-wheel grams, a chili cook-off, bake sales, a pie social and a jeans day.

In 2019, these creative activities and employee gifts raised \$1.5 million through the Employee Giving Campaign. Employees across the Allina Health system designate their gifts to Courage Kenny services. Thank you to our generous employees!



Each year, children related to our employees enter their drawings into our annual Employee Giving Campaign button contest. Employees vote on button designs to select a winner. This is the 2019 winner! Employees who donate receive a button and wear them at work to spread awareness about the campaign.



The annual Courage Kenny Employee Duck Race took place on October 8. This year's race was a tie! The winners, pictured above with their trophy, were Courage Kenny Foundation's Stephen Bariteau and Erin Enger.

It is now easier to give than ever. Allina Health Office of Philanthropy has created a new giving page featuring all of our foundations. Visit allinahealth.org/give and see how your contributions are making a difference in the lives of our patients and our community.

Marquetta Stokes: *Feeling like herself again*

“Courage Kenny gave me my life back,” said Marquetta Stokes.

In 2015, Stokes was hit by a vehicle that ran a red light and plowed into the driver’s side of her car. After the accident, she received both physical and occupational therapies, but found that she had begun to struggle at work in ways she hadn’t before the accident. So when a call came in about returning to a previous job as a judicial court clerk in Hennepin County, she jumped at the chance. She thought “I can do this, I’ve done it before.”

But Stokes continued to have difficulty, even in a familiar job. She wasn’t able to multi-task and found that she would often write numbers backwards. She talked with her new boss about the problems and then sought help from a neurologist and from vocational counseling at a Minnesota Workforce Center.

The neurologist diagnosed Stokes with a traumatic brain injury (TBI). Symptoms of a TBI can include impairments related to thinking, memory, movement, vision, hearing, emotional functioning and more. For some, the symptoms may last only a few days. For others, it can affect the rest of their lives.

“At first I refused to believe it,” said Stokes. “I didn’t want more therapy, I just wanted my life back.” When the Workforce Center counselor recommended more therapy and job training, she reluctantly agreed to go to Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute.

“I met with Leanne Jackson,” said Stokes. “She told me what would take place during my treatment. I would sometimes meet with her alone and sometimes with another patient for different types of testing and work projects. But I can honestly say my heart was not in it.”

Then one day, Jackson, who is a vocational evaluator at Courage Kenny, had Stokes try something new. She put Stokes in quiet room with dimmed lights. She then played some meditation music. Stokes said something in her finally relaxed, and she released all the depression, anxiety, anger and other emotions that had been building since the accident.

“That day, I gave more of myself,” said Stokes. “I finally realized that this was helping and that something better would come of this. I got my confidence back.”

Through the therapy and vocational counseling from Courage Kenny and job coaching from the Workforce Center, she was able to find a job with the Minnesota Department of Education that fit her.



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“I believe that the people at Courage Kenny look at each person who comes there and look inside to know what they need. They were able to look at me and give me the tools I needed to succeed. And I have used every task and tool that Leanne gave me during my recovery in my job and my life.”
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Vocational Services at Courage Kenny is generously supported by Otto Bremer Trust, the Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation, Ameriprise Financial and donors like you!

Showcasing artists with disabilities to support rehabilitation services



Holiday cards and gifts support Courage Kenny!



Each year, Courage Kenny offers holiday cards featuring artwork by artists with disabilities, but this year, there's more. We now offer custom photo cards, journals and fine art prints in a variety of designs. Cards and gifts can be purchased online at CourageKennyCards.org.

Cards can also be purchased at your local Lunds & Byerly's, Bachman's and Rose Floral in Stillwater. Every purchase helps us provide services for clients working towards healthy and independent lives!

Paula Davidovich: Becoming an artist again

Paula Davidovich first noticed that she wasn't feeling well in August 2016. What began as cold-like symptoms quickly progressed into a hospital stay, many tests and eventually, paralysis in her arms and legs. Davidovich would later be diagnosed with acute flaccid myelitis, a polio-like illness that is very rare, especially in adults.

After her hospital stay, Davidovich came to Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute – Golden Valley and spent six months in the Transitional Rehabilitation Program. As a part of her extensive rehabilitation, she learned to write with her left hand. Davidovich had previously been right-handed, but after her illness, only her left hand was strong enough to hold a pen. So, she began retraining her brain to use her previously non-dominant hand for everything.

One day, during her time in the Transitional Rehabilitation Program, therapeutic recreation specialist, Derek LaBerge brought an easel and paint set to her room. Davidovich's mom had taught her to paint when she was young. Being an artist was an important part of her identity, but she hadn't painted since her illness. With her left hand, she began creating again.

Davidovich continues to paint and gain dexterity in her left hand. She has even noticed changes in her artwork. She says she feels more drawn to bright colors since her illness. She thinks this is reflection of the joy and gratitude she works to embody every day.



Paula Davidovich's artwork was featured in the Courage Kenny 2019 Art of Possibilities Art Show and Sale. The Art of Possibilities Art Show and Sale takes place each April and May and showcases work by artists with disabilities from around the globe.

Courage Kenny Foundation wraps up a year of inspiring events

Healthy Living for a Lifetime, part of the Rita Kaplan Lecture Series

Tuesday, August 13, 2019

American Swedish Institute, Minneapolis

This August, Courage Kenny Foundation and the Kaplan family hosted the annual Rita Kaplan Lecture Series on the topic of "The Compassionate Connection." National health expert, David Rakel, MD, spoke about improving connections with those around us. About 100 attendees learned about tools that help you live with clarity, wisdom and good health. This enriching annual lecture series is supported by Rita Kaplan's sister, Barbara, Rita's husband, Manuel Kaplan, MD, their friends and dozens of Courage Kenny employees.



Healthy Living for a Lifetime
9th Annual Rita Kaplan Lecture Series
The Compassionate Connection



Shoot for Fun

Saturday, September 7, 2019

Old Vermilion Trail Hunting Preserve, Duluth

On September 7, 480 clay pigeon shooting enthusiasts gathered for a day of fun to support Courage Kenny Northland. Attendees enjoyed a beautiful day of clay pigeon shooting at the Old Vermilion Trail Hunting Preserve and collectively raised more than \$150,000. Thank you to our presenting sponsors, API Group, Northland Constructors, United Piping Inc. and Jamar.

A Toast to Courage

Friday, October 11, 2019

Radisson Blu Mall of America, Bloomington

On Friday October 11, more than 350 guests joined Courage Kenny Foundation for the annual A Toast to Courage gala. The proceeds from this year's event specifically supported the expansion of Courage Kenny's virtual reality rehabilitation technology to 27 Courage Kenny sites. Guests enjoyed a five-course meal with wine pairings from Haskell's, an inspiring program with emcee Rena Sarigianopoulos from KARE 11, and remarks from Penny Wheeler, MD, CEO, of Allina Health. Together, this community raised \$360,000 in one night. A special thank you to our gold sponsor, Reliable Medical Supply and silver sponsors, Change Healthcare, Handi Medical, Moss & Barnett, Stinson Leonard Street LLP and United Healthcare.



Program Feature: *Courage Kenny Riders*

Every spring and summer, about 40 youth with disabilities have the chance to master a unique skill: horseback riding! Courage Kenny Riders is a therapeutic horseback riding program for young people with disabilities.

Each week riders gather at the Washington County Fairgrounds for sessions that include greeting and brushing their horse, stretching their own bodies and finally, riding their horse. Three volunteers assist each rider with the horse's owner leading the horse and one "sidewalker" on each side of the rider for stability.

Therapeutic horseback riding has unique physical and mental benefits for youth with disabilities. Riders improve strength and flexibility in muscles and joints. It can be especially useful for those who use a wheelchair because riding a horse creates hip and back movement very similar to walking.

When one young girl began riding this year, she was unable to hold herself up on the horse. Throughout the session she increased her core strength. By the end she was able to ride nearly unassisted for up to 30 minutes!



Bella Severin rides Ruby, with volunteers Winston Ware, Valarie Jarstad and Larry Moskiewicz



Volunteer Molly King (right) used to participate in Courage Kenny Riders when she was young. Now, she gives back by bringing her own horse, Tyrian, as a volunteer. Here she leads rider, Meagan Plath, with volunteers Colleen Jensen and Valarie Jarstad.

Riders also gain confidence and communication skills through horseback riding. One participant was slow to engage with his horse and the volunteers. Each week he made slow progress gaining more and more confidence with his horse. By the end of the session, he was always excited to see his horse and talked comfortably with the volunteers.

Each year, about 70 volunteers, some of them horses, make Courage Kenny Riders possible. Volunteers and donors like you make possible the huge mental and physical health benefits of participating in Courage Kenny Riders. Because of you, youth with disabilities get the chance to experience this exciting and unique summer activity!

Robert A. and Yvonne E. MacDonald Distinguished Employee Award

The late Bob MacDonald and his wife, Yvonne, were supporters of both Courage Center and Sister Kenny Rehabilitation Institute long before the organizations merged to become Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute. Bob MacDonald used both Courage Center and Sister Kenny's services to regain his health and independence after a spinal cord injury. The family generously sponsored employee-recognition events at both organizations. Now that the organizations have merged, the Robert A. and Yvonne E. MacDonald Endowment Fund continues to celebrate Courage Kenny employees.

Because of the generosity of the MacDonald family, Courage Kenny is able to formally thank the staff who make a lasting difference in the lives of our clients. Each year, the MacDonald Endowment Fund sponsors an employee appreciation event. This year's event was held at the Radisson Blu Mall of America on Thursday November 7. Employees participated in a scavenger hunt, enjoyed a dinner and celebrated the 2019 recipients of the MacDonald Distinguished Employee Award.

This year's honorees are:

- **Cara Battles**, physical therapist
- **Jenny De Rasmi**, certified occupational therapy assistant
- **Amanda Fuchs**, speech language pathologist
- **Michael Glenn**, independent living skills specialist
- **John Hadro**, physical therapist
- **Kevin Hoffman**, certified medical assistant
- **Jennifer Lee**, mental health associate/behavior analyst
- **Michelle Schierts**, speech language pathologist
- **Sara Wiberg**, aquatic/fitness specialist



Cara Battles



Jenny De Rasmi



Amanda Fuchs



Michael Glenn



John Hadro



Kevin Hoffman



Jennifer Lee



Michelle Schierts



Sara Wiberg

A heartfelt congratulations to this year's honorees, and thank you to the MacDonald family!



COURAGE KENNY FOUNDATION

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