

Onward

WINTER
2020

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



Your generosity is inspiring! In a year of battling a global pandemic and continuing to serve people with disabilities and chronic health conditions, your support for our patients and clients is more appreciated than ever. As the pandemic continues, Courage Kenny services have a critical place in the COVID-19 recovery process. Bernie Goldblatt (pictured) spent time in Courage Kenny's Transitional Rehabilitation Program recovering from a severe case of COVID-19. Read his story on page 3.

Dear Courage Kenny Community,

My name is Alex Mitchell. I am a former client who participated in inpatient and outpatient therapies, as well as the ABLE and fitness programs at Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute. After my experience as a client, I knew that I wanted to work with people who had gone through similar situations as I had, and to help people with disabilities improve their health and quality of life. That is why I'm thrilled to be back at Courage Kenny as a Therapeutic Recreation Intern working in the Aquatics and Fitness, and Sports & Recreation departments in Golden Valley (read more about my story on page 9).

I am inspired by Courage Kenny because of the amazing coworkers and clients I get to work with every day. The sense of community and family here is unlike any environment I have been a part of. I am inspired by the perseverance every client shows whether they are working in the fitness center or in the pool. Everyone I see has a great attitude, and gives 110% effort during their sessions. They inspire me to not allow my disability to keep me from doing the things I enjoy, and they drive me to work hard on my own recovery.

I see generosity every day when I come into the Arthur Andersen Minneapolis Alumni Fitness & Wellness Center and see how big of a transformation it has had since I was a client. When I was in the ABLE program, there was only one Therastride treadmill for the ABLE program. Now there are two treadmills, each located in their own spacious and light-filled rooms. The fitness center is also larger, brighter and better equipped than it was when I was a client. This large expansion was made possible because of the incredible generosity of our donors. It is heartwarming to think of how many more people have an opportunity to improve their quality of life because of the generosity of others.

I also see generosity in the employees who are dedicating their lives to helping people with disabilities overcome insurmountable odds and reach their goals. I can't thank everyone enough who has donated their time and money to Courage Kenny. For me it is extremely personal. I wouldn't be writing this letter if it wasn't for your generosity and support. Without the programs here at Courage Kenny, I would never have recovered from my injury to the extent I have. I would not have been able to go to college and prepare for a career I love so much. Thank you!

Wishing the best for you and your family this season,

Alex Mitchell
Courage Kenny Intern



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I wouldn't be writing this letter if it wasn't for your generosity and support.

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BERNIE GOLDBLATT:

Recovering from COVID-19 at Courage Kenny

On April 1, when the COVID-19 pandemic was just becoming a strong presence in the lives of Minnesotans, Bernie Goldblatt was rushed to Abbott Northwestern Hospital. Goldblatt had what was quickly becoming a very serious case of COVID-19. Soon after arriving in the ICU, Goldblatt was placed on a ventilator, his kidneys also began to fail and he was placed on dialysis. During his several weeks in the ICU, Goldblatt's family was told to prepare for his death three different times.

Thankfully, he eventually began to improve. When Goldblatt first woke up, he remembers, "the only thing that seemed to work were my eyes." When he realized that he couldn't move or speak he thought that he had had a stroke.

Slowly, Goldblatt began to regain some movement. "I viewed every movement as a victory," he said. On June 4, he was well enough to be transferred to Courage Kenny's Transitional Rehabilitation Program (TRP) in Golden Valley to focus on regaining more mobility and skills for independence. Goldblatt's goal was to walk again.

"Therapy here was terrific," Goldblatt said during his final week in TRP. Since arriving, he had started walking with a walker slowly and for small distances. He worked on balance and on transferring himself from his bed to his chair and his chair to the shower – all skills to give him more independence at home.

In his final week in the TRP, Goldblatt went from walking with a walker to using walking sticks. Then, one day, his therapist said, "can I see those sticks for a second?" He took his first independent steps since being rushed to the hospital four months earlier.

In addition to receiving exceptional physical and occupational therapy, Goldblatt was able to meet with the TRP chaplain, psychologist, and speech and

cognitive therapists to support his recovery in a holistic way. A source of strength for him throughout his journey was the support of his family. Even when he was in the ICU and unable to have visitors, a nurse would hold up his phone so his family could talk to him on Zoom. They called him every night so they could stay updated, and talk and sing to their father and grandfather.

After remarkable progress in the TRP, Goldblatt returned home and continues outpatient therapy at Courage Kenny to move closer to his goal of walking independently. "I consider myself one of the most fortunate people on earth," Goldblatt reflected. "I am just so fortunate I ended up here. This is an outstanding place...they saved my life and they enriched my life."

"Courage Kenny will always be a place where I regained my life...Thank you Courage Kenny. Thank you TRP."



Goldblatt with his daughters after returning home

E.A. SWEEN COMPANY

CREATING IMPACT

FOR 14 YEARS

E.A. Sween Company of Eden Prairie has maintained a generous, genuine and trusting relationship with Courage Kenny for more than 14 years.

Tom H. Sween, President and CEO, reflects on why a partnership with Courage Kenny is a natural fit for the values of E.A. Sween. He explains, "we're a people organization," and part of E.A. Sween's core values is about giving. The company strives to give to organizations that make a strong lasting impact on their communities.

This partnership began with Sween's father, Tom E. Sween, who was introduced to Courage Kenny through a then E.A. Sween Company board member and became involved. When Tom H. Sween took over for his father as President and CEO, he continued to build on the relationship with Courage Kenny.

When the company partners with nonprofit organizations, they want it to be a two-way street, explains Sween. They look for a lasting partnership built on strong individual relationships – and that's what they have found at Courage Kenny.

Sween remembers being particularly moved by Rob Wudlick's story. Wudlick was an ABLE program participant in 2011 after sustaining a spinal cord injury while river rafting. Sween reflected, "not everyone river rafts, but everyone does something active." He immediately saw how quickly someone's life could



change, and the value of the ABLE program in helping people regain strength, function and mobility. Hearing Wudlick's story motivated him to support the 2016 fitness center and ABLE expansion with a significant gift. Thanks to the E.A. Sween Company's generous support of the fitness center expansion, one of the two Therastride ABLE treadmill rooms is named in honor of the company—a constant reminder of their remarkable partnership with Courage Kenny.

Sween says, "it's all about the people," because he sees that building lasting relationships, especially with clients, is prioritized at Courage Kenny. But rather than just writing a check, he wants to continue to learn about Courage Kenny's impact on people's lives. "It's about getting out and finding out what's behind the energy there."

E.A. Sween's giving is focused and intentional. The company aligns giving with what their 1,200 employees are passionate about. That's one reason E.A. Sween decided to invest in the new TRP expansion project (read more on page 6). The project was the funding focus for the 2020 A Toast to Courage virtual gala, and E.A. Sween gave a generous early donation to support the project and provide incentive for others to support it as well. This project fits with the company's desire to support something impactful and targeted with a clear plan to address an identified need.

This lasting partnership with Courage Kenny is rewarding for E.A. Sween employees because it aligns with what they care about. They are enthusiastic and proud to work for a company committed to making a tangible and notable difference in their own community.

Over this fourteen-year partnership, E.A. Sween has invested more than a half million dollars into Courage Kenny programs and services. Thank you, E.A. Sween for your continued involvement, support and partnership.



Tom H. Sween (right) pictured with Courage Kenny client Rob Wudlick, Courage Kenny Foundation's Rose Adams (left), and lead ABLE specialist Dain Clausen.

ABILITY EQUIPPED: *The Hartford and Move United support adaptive sports*

The Hartford and Move United (formerly Disabled Sports USA) have come together to fund adaptive sports equipment for people with disabilities through their Ability Equipped grant. Courage Kenny Adaptive Sports and Recreation is thrilled to be selected as a recipient of \$40,000 worth of new equipment!

In addition to this generous donation to Courage Kenny, The Hartford and Move United gifted a new sport wheelchair directly to a Courage Kenny athlete. Sport wheelchairs can be very expensive, and many players opt to borrow Courage Kenny's sport wheelchairs instead of purchasing their own. However, one fortunate athlete— Antonio Vazquez – can now use his own chair and practice whenever he wants!

Vazquez has been playing wheelchair basketball at Courage Kenny for four years. He has worked his way up onto the Junior Rolling Gophers varsity team with his smooth shooting. Vazquez has developed both socially, and physically since starting basketball. Vazquez's mother is committed to getting him to every practice and tournament. The gift of an appropriately sized and style sport wheelchair will enable Vazquez to improve his playing considerably and opens up doors for him to compete at a higher level as he grows. Having his own chair also allows recreation to become a part of Vazquez's day-to-day life.

On October 29th, a group of Adaptive Sports and Recreation staff surprised Vazquez with his new wheelchair at a press conference at Courage Kenny. A grateful Vazquez said "I don't let my disability stop me from living life." The Hartford and Move United also unveiled the brand new equipment trailer they donated to Courage Kenny Adaptive Sports and Recreation.

In addition to the chair for Vazquez and the trailer, The Hartford and Move United grant will fund:

- 3 sport wheelchairs
- 3 snow sliders to support stand up adaptive skiers

- 1 Nordic Sit Ski
- 1 Trike for adaptive cycling
- 1 Youth Trike for adaptive cycling
- 2 Indoor Bocce Sets to play an adaptive game similar to Bocce Ball
- 5 sets of archery bows and cases

This new equipment will make a real impact on the lives of many clients. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic we have been loaning adaptive sports equipment to families so they can stay active in ways that feel safe. It is critical to our mission to continue to create access to sports and recreation opportunities for our community. This new equipment ensures that our athletes have the best equipment and the newest technology to practice their sport to the fullest.

“It doesn’t matter what your disability is, what matters most is who you are from the inside.”

-Antonio Vazquez



Antonio Vazquez sits in his new sport wheelchair with Stephen Bariteau of Courage Kenny Foundation (right); Josh Ortiz of the Minnesota Twins and a Courage Kenny Foundation board member; and AJ Dordel, wheelchair basketball coach (left).

BUILDING THE THERAPY GYM OF THE FUTURE TO ACCELERATE RECOVERY!



Courage Kenny is seeking your support for phase one of a multi-phase expansion of the Transitional Rehabilitation Program (TRP) to enhance patient experience and advance recovery outcomes. This first phase includes expanding the TRP therapy gym and equipping it with cutting-edge technology to improve patient outcomes.

TRP has been honored to work with an increasing number of patients over the past few years. As the number of patients in need of comprehensive rehabilitation has grown, we no longer have sufficient space and equipment to provide the highest quality therapy experience to everyone. We plan to equip the new therapy gym with state-of-the-art rehabilitation technology that will accelerate the recovery process and improve outcomes. Equipment includes:

The Armeo Spring – the first upper body extremity exoskeleton device of its kind for hand and arm therapy. This will allow patients to do even more repetitions of therapy exercises in a typical session.

Zero-G – This adaptable body weight support system supports the patient during therapy exercises or can assist therapists while transferring a patient from a chair to a therapy mat.

Two Ceiling Lifts - These multidirectional ceiling mounted lifts will support patients' weight and help them to more easily move around the therapy gym.

Lite Run - This gait-training device allows patients to start practicing walking earlier in their recovery. The pressurized lower half of the device supports the patient, reducing the amount of weight their legs need to support.

This project is especially critical as we navigate the COVID-19 pandemic. Rehabilitation therapies are proving to be an integral part of recovery for people who have been hospitalized with COVID-19. The TRP has begun to welcome patients recovering from the lasting effects of the virus (like Bernie Goldblatt, page 3). In this challenging time, donor support can provide patients recovering from COVID-19 with the most effective technology to accelerate their recovery.

Throughout 2020, Courage Kenny TRP is expected to provide up to three hours of therapy five to six days per week for more than 200 patients. We want to provide our patients with the most effective equipment in an environment that fosters healing and supports progress as they work on their rehabilitation goals.

You can help make the state-of-the art therapy gym a reality for our patients. Designate your gift to the TRP Therapy Gym Expansion with the enclosed envelope or online at allinahealth.org/Give2CourageKenny.

Did you know...

You can support the programs you love with a lasting legacy by making a planned gift? Planned giving is not just for the wealthy. Everyone has the option to incorporate Courage Kenny into their plans and create a larger and longer lasting impact on the programs you love.

PAUL REBHLZ

THE GIFT OF TIME AT HOME

Josh Rebholz says that his father, Paul, was able to spend the last year of his life at home thanks to Courage Kenny.

Paul was diagnosed with Glioblastoma (a type of brain cancer) in March 2019. An initial surgery to remove the tumor went well, and Paul began radiation and chemotherapy. Unfortunately, during a second surgery, he suffered a stroke. As a result, he came to the Courage Kenny Transitional Rehabilitation Program (TRP) in Golden Valley that summer to regain function and independence.

For Paul, the stakes for his recovery were high when he was in TRP. His family's house was a split level, and being able to use stairs was essential to his ability to live at home. If he couldn't manage stairs, he would most likely need to live in a long term care facility instead of returning home.

Paul's time in TRP was busy. He participated in his full-time therapy through Courage Kenny, while continuing radiation and chemotherapy offsite. In the evenings, Paul stayed busy with frequent visits from family and friends including his sons, Jake and Josh, and his wife, Laura. They joined him for dinner and spent time outdoors in the beautiful Courage Kenny grounds.

While at Courage Kenny, Paul also found time to participate in the TRP film class funded by the Minnesota State Arts Board. As a part of this class, instructors from FilmNorth helped him and fellow TRP residents produce videos about their time in the TRP and their recovery. Jake, Josh, and Laura recall with a chuckle that Paul was often too busy with visitors and spending time outdoors to work on his homework for the film class. But in the end, they are thankful to have a video of Paul telling his own story of recovery and gratitude.

Before he got sick, Paul had been a supporter of Courage Kenny by attending the Encourage Breakfast event for Courage Kenny St. Croix. Laura surmises that when he sat at the breakfast listening to client stories, he never dreamed he would one day be one of those clients.

Paul's family feels fortunate and grateful that he was able to come to Courage Kenny. "Everyone told us 'Courage Kenny is the best place... if you can get in there, you're gold,'" Laura recalled. The entire family enjoyed spending time with Paul on the lovely and spacious Golden Valley



campus. "The therapists were all amazing," Laura said, and "his aides and nurses were all very kind and patient."

"Everyone at Courage Kenny was so positive," added Jake. "Their positive attitudes and encouragement helped my dad stay motivated. They set him up to succeed." Paul also benefitted from social connections with other TRP residents who were optimistic and driven to get better too.

When Paul regained enough strength and mobility, he was able to move home and continue outpatient therapy at Courage Kenny St. Croix. They loved the warm and welcoming community. "Everyone knew him there," said Laura.

"Courage Kenny helped my dad get back home and be able to live a dignified life," Josh reflected. After three months in hospitals and at Courage Kenny, Paul and his family got almost a year together at home.

Paul Rebholz passed away in August 2020. He lives on in the cherished memories of his many friends, beloved family members, and the Courage Kenny caregivers and therapists who were fortunate to be part of his journey.



Paul Rebholz with sons, Josh and Jake

CELEBRATING A FALL FILLED WITH SAFE AND SUCCESSFUL EVENTS

Thanks to you, we were able to hold all of our planned fall events in ways that keep our community safe! Thank you for showing up in a new way and continuing to give generously to support Courage Kenny patients and clients.



SHOOT FOR FUN

Shoot for Fun is our annual fundraiser for Courage Kenny Northland, supporting Adaptive Sports & Recreation opportunities in Northeastern Minnesota and Northwestern Wisconsin. This year, instead of gathering all teams for a one-day group event, we offered individual teams opportunities to participate in rounds of sporting clays throughout the month of August. Even with a distanced event, donors gave \$83,000 to support adaptive sports and recreation opportunities for people with disabilities in the Northland!



Young Courage Kenny St. Croix client, Mabel (center), and her family shared an update on her progress. Mabel's story was first featured at the Encourage Breakfast in 2018.



ENCOURAGE LUNCH

This year, the Virtual Encourage Lunch took the place of our annual Encourage Breakfast to support Courage Kenny St. Croix. On September 22, donors logged on to hear client stories and celebrate the impact of Courage Kenny St. Croix. Emceed by Stillwater Mayor Ted Kozlowski, the virtual lunch raised over \$111,000 for Courage Kenny St. Croix!

A TOAST TO COURAGE

Finally, A Toast to Courage Gala is always our biggest event of the year. This year, donors tuned in virtually on October 6 to celebrate and support Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute. Attendees participated in an online auction, and had the special opportunity to support cutting-edge rehabilitation technology for the Transitional Rehabilitation Program (read more about the TRP expansion project on page 6). Paul Douglas emceed the virtual event which raised more than \$435,000. We were also thrilled to present The Spirit of Courage Award to Jan Malcolm (pictured), former president of Courage Kenny Foundation and current Minnesota Commissioner of Health.

Your presence and generosity at these events was overwhelming. Thank you for all you've done to support our patients and clients this year!

ABLE PROGRAM CELEBRATES 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY!

The Activity Based Locomotor Exercise (ABLE) program opened in September 2010 with support of a grant from the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation NeuroRecovery Network (NRN). The ABLE program is an intensive fitness program that serves people with neurological disorders and injuries. A truly innovative program, ABLE is one of just five Neuro Recovery Network Community Fitness and Wellness programs in the nation and the only one of its kind in the Upper Midwest. The success of the ABLE program over the past ten years has been amplified significantly by donor-funded ABLE scholarships.

In the first 10 years, ABLE has:

- Served 185 clients
- Delivered more than 50,000 interventions (including Locomotor Training, Neuromuscular Electrical Stimulation, Functional Electrical Stimulation, guided exercise)



Kirk Ingram, ABLE program participant uses the Therastride locomotor treadmill.

- Increased from 5 staff to 30 staff
- Used data collected in research to publish manuscripts, present posters and plan future studies
- Expanded Fitness Center including second Body Weight Supported Treadmill in 2017
- Awarded 79 scholarships, almost \$500,000, thanks to generous donors

ALEX MITCHELL: EARLY ABLE CLIENT TO COURAGE KENNY INTERN

In 2013 Alex Mitchell sustained a spinal cord injury from a snowboarding accident. At the time, Mitchell was in high school and had big hopes for his future. After one month of inpatient treatment in Wisconsin, and two months of inpatient therapy through Courage Kenny at Abbott Northwestern Hospital, Mitchell returned home and continued his recovery through the ABLE program. Through ABLE, Mitchell saw remarkable progress toward his goal to move around more independently. By the time he finished the program, he had progressed from using a power wheelchair to walking with forearm crutches. Mitchell also got involved with some Adaptive Sports & Recreation programs and participated in the Driver Assessment and Training program to get his driver's license.

When Mitchell started college, he knew he wanted to work with people who were going through something similar to what he had at Courage Kenny. He learned about a program for Therapeutic Recreation at UW Lacrosse, and immediately knew he wanted to pursue it.

Now nearing graduation, Mitchell is a Courage Kenny Therapeutic Recreation intern for the fall of 2020. He is happy to be back and see everything now from the staff perspective. He's been helping to lead exercise

classes virtually and in-person for Aquatics and Fitness and Adaptive Sports & Recreation. Mitchell says that the experience has made him more aware of a wide array of disabilities and strengths people can have. Returning as an intern, he said, "reminded me why I love it so much. There's a real sense of community here," he reflected, noting that some of his former ABLE specialists remembered him when he returned as an intern seven years later.

"I feel this is my way to give back for Courage Kenny helping me through my injury," Mitchell reflected. "Hopefully I can help other individuals in improving their quality of life, achieving their fitness goals, and not letting their disability define them."



Announcing the 2020 Robert A. and Yvonne E. MacDonald Distinguished Employee Award Winners!

Each year all Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute staff are celebrated for their part in making the organization a success for the clients and patients we serve. Courage Kenny leadership give special recognition for staff who have completed certifications and awards throughout the year, for length of service honorees, and for those presented with the Robert A. and Yvonne E. MacDonald Distinguished Service Awards. This recognition event is held each year thanks to the generosity of the Robert A. and Yvonne E. MacDonald Endowment Fund.

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 used both Courage Center and Sister Kenny services to regain his health and independence after a spinal cord injury. The family generously sponsored employee recognition events at both organizations.

Typically the event has been held in person, which was Bob's wish from the start. But due to COVID-19, this year's gathering was a virtual event on November 5th. The festive online gathering honored award winners and all employees for their service to patients and clients with unwavering commitment during this challenging year. Bob and Yvonne's legacy continues through their granddaughter, Tami Crawford's stewardship and support for Courage Kenny employees. Each year Tami honors and reflects on her grandparents' generosity and wishes, this year sharing her grandfather's wish: "I want to make sure that every single person in this organization is celebrated."

We are deeply grateful for the MacDonald family's generosity, then and now. The following are the exceptional staff members who were honored this year with the Robert A. and Yvonne E. MacDonald Distinguished Service Awards.



Rose Adams

*Manager, Development,
Courage Kenny Foundation,
Golden Valley*

"Rose is passionate about helping and inspiring colleagues and clients to exceed their potential."



Sarah Beuning, MSW

Social Worker, United Hospital

"Sarah promotes positive morale by consistently displaying a respectful and courteous attitude. She is deliberate about making positive, personal connections with patients and families, ensuring they are heard, respected, and supported."



Elizabeth Beck, MD

Physiatrist, Abbott Northwestern Hospital

"Dr. Beck approaches patient care with an art. This leaves patients feeling heard, respected, and confident with their diagnosis and plan of care in effort to achieve their goals."



Karla Casper

Independent Living Skills Specialist, Golden Valley

"She continues to be a strong team player by reaching out to other staff when she feels they are in need, and willing to help train any new hires starting out in their roles."



Puthida Chart, PT

**Lead Physical Therapist,
Mercy Hospital - Unity Campus**

“She is an excellent team player who stepped up to meet the needs during the COVID-19 pandemic while helping her team adjust to each new and ongoing change.”



Lisa Leininger, PT

**Physical Therapist, Inpatient Acute Therapy,
Abbott Northwestern Hospital**

“Lisa lives the spirit of service and whole person care – going above and beyond for patients, caregivers, and community.”



Daniel Delapp, SLP

**Speech Language Pathologist,
United Hospital**

“Daniel provides whole person care by using his creative and innovative thinking, then delivering the best care to patients.”



Darci Olson, PT

Physical Therapist, Site Coordinator, Courage Kenny Sports & PT - Coon Rapids Springbrook

“She demonstrates Allina Health Commitment to Care by adapting to a frequently changing environment while engaging and partnering with fellow team members.”



Candice Jackson, CNA

Nursing Assistant, Transitional Rehabilitation Program, Golden Valley

“She constantly seeks out opportunities to be helpful to clients and team members.”



Raquel Rietveld

Clinic Support Specialist II, Courage Kenny Spine Center, Plymouth

“Raquel provides compassion, patience, and good humor during all patient interactions.”



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THIS HOLIDAY SEASON SEND A CARD THAT GIVES TWICE – COURAGE KENNY CARDS!

For more than 60 years, Courage Kenny Cards have featured original artwork by artists with disabilities.

Shop cards online at www.CourageKennyCards.org or as packaged cards at *all Lunds & Byerly's locations, or Bachman's and Rose Floral in Stillwater*. These community service retailers generously return 100% of the card sales to Courage Kenny Foundation.



Donate your car. Change a life.

Now is a great time to donate your used car or boat! The Cars for Courage Kenny staff are taking extra precautions to ensure you can donate your vehicle to support Courage Kenny without needing to interact with our staff directly.

We are offering free towing of your vehicle from your location or you can drop it off at our Courage Kenny Golden Valley parking lot at a time that is convenient for you.

Give us a call at **612-775-2500** or visit CarsForCourageKenny.org to learn more!