

Medical Treatment • Research • Rehabilitation

Shepherd

Center Spinal Column®



In Good Hands

Jackson Drum's care team helps him through recovery with hope, humor, and heart

Also Inside

Trick-or-Treat: Halloween Traditions Explained » 4
From Rehab to Rugby » 18 Project Rollway Recap » 16

news.shepherd.org | Fall 2025

Shepherd Center
2020 Peachtree Road NW
Atlanta, Georgia 30309
404-352-2020
magazine@shepherd.org
news.shepherd.org

Editor
Erin Kenney

Design
Soloflight Design

Contributing Writers
Damjana Alverson, Sara Baxter, Phillip Jordan, Erin Kenney, Dominique McPhearson, Teresa Weaver

Contributing Photographers
Laura Barnard, Bita Honarvar, Heather Hercher, Lindsay Ann Snyder, William Twitty, Joann Vitelli, 524 Creative

Board of Directors
Officers
James D. Thompson, Chairman
Clark H. Dean, Chair-elect
Sara S. Chapman, Corporate Secretary
Juli Owens, Recording Secretary

Ex-Officio
Jamie Shepherd, MBA, MHA, FACHE,
President and Chief Executive Officer
Beth Boatwright Giles, CPA, Treasurer
Chief Financial Officer
Michael R. Yochelson, MD, MBA
Chief Medical Officer

Members

Andrew Alias	Justin Jones
Fred V. Alias	Molly Lanier
Shaler Alias	Douglas Lindauer
David F. Apple, Jr., M.D.	Charles Talbot Nunnally III
Cyndae Arrendale	Sally D. Nunnally*
Bryant G. Coats	Vincenzo Piscopo
Robert Cunningham	John Rooker
Charles L. Davidson III	Alana Shepherd
John S. Dryman	W. Clyde Shepherd
Gen. Larry R. Ellis, Ret.	K. Boynton Smith
William C. Fowler	James E. Stephenson
Susan Hawkins	Jarrad Turner

**Board Member Emerita*

Shepherd Center Magazine: Spinal Column is published quarterly by Shepherd Center, a private, not-for-profit hospital that provides world-class clinical care, research, and family support for people experiencing the most complex conditions, including spinal cord and brain injuries, multi-trauma, traumatic amputations, stroke, multiple sclerosis, and pain. To request removal from our mailing list, email magazine@shepherd.org or mail Shepherd Center, Attn: Shepherd Center Magazine Mailing List, 2020 Peachtree Road NW, Atlanta, Georgia, 30309. Please include mailing label. Shepherd Center Magazine accepts no advertising. Spinal Column is a registered trademark of Shepherd Center.

About the Cover
Jackson Drum and members of his support system. (From left) Wes Chay, Katie Beck, Jason Drum, Artica Jackson, and Martha DeReimer. Photo by Bita Honarvar

Letter from Jamie Shepherd



Dear Readers,

One of the members on our board of directors often tells a story about seeing a member of our environmental services team mopping the floor. When the board member asked what he was doing, he simply replied, "I'm changing lives."

That statement is no exaggeration. Everyone at the hospital plays a part in helping patients and their families return to lives of independence, joy, and meaning. It's crucial for clinicians and non-clinical staff members alike to form strong bonds with each other and with our patients, many of whom are here for months at a time.

Collaboration is something we take seriously. But sometimes, the greatest opportunities for bonding lie in more lighthearted circumstances. My dad, James, was a big prankster, and when he, my grandparents, and Dr. Apple were starting Shepherd Center, they wanted to infuse that sense of humor into the hospital culture. In this issue of Spinal Column, we focus on teamwork at Shepherd and celebrate our unique values of hope, humor, and hard work.

On page 8, you'll meet Jackson Drum, a hockey player from Minnesota. Jackson arrived at Shepherd in February, and his care team has given him unwavering support for every stage of his rehabilitation journey — from facing challenging medical complications to milestones like participating in Project Rollway.

On page 4, you'll learn about Shepherd Center's Halloween traditions, including not one but two haunted houses and a fiercely competitive costume contest.

And starting on page 22, you can browse photos from Adventure Skills Workshop, Project Rollway, and Derby Day — traditions that bring together patients, their families, and our wider community.

Our patients and staff accomplish incredible things every day, but nothing is achieved alone. Read on to experience the bonds we form at Shepherd — the friendships between colleagues, the trust between patients and their care teams, and the family atmosphere that unites us all.

Sincerely,

Jamie Shepherd

Jamie Shepherd, MBA, MHA, FACHE
President and Chief Executive Officer of Shepherd Center



Fall 2025 | Shepherd Center

Contents

Features

8 **In Good Hands**
Jackson Drum's Care Team Supports Him Throughout Recovery

18 **From Rehab to Rugby**
Jonathan Horna's Unexpected Journey to Wheelchair Rugby

Departments

2 **Short Takes**

4 **Shepherd Legends**
Shepherd Center's hair-raising Halloween traditions explained

6 **Staff Profile**
Engineering Director William Davidson shares his Shepherd story

22 **Foundation Features**

32 **Honorariums and Memorials**



See news.shepherd.org
for additional online content.

Gifts of Generosity

If you would like to make a gift to support the work you have read about, please contact Sarah L. Batts at the Shepherd Center Foundation at **404-350-7305** or scan the QR code.





(From left) Susannah Scaroni and Daniel Romanchuk took home top prizes in the women's open division and the men's open division.

Racing Up Hope Hill

2025 Peachtree Road Race Continues Legacy of Hope & Inclusion

Thousands of spectators watched the 44th Shepherd Center Wheelchair Division of The Atlanta Journal-Constitution Peachtree Road Race on July 4, cheering on the best wheelchair racers in the world in Atlanta's iconic 10K.

This year, Susannah Scaroni, 34, of Champaign, Illinois, won the women's open division with a finishing time of 21:26 and took home a \$12,500 prize for her first-place finish. This is her fifth win. In the men's open, Daniel Romanchuk, 27, of Champaign, Illinois, took the crown with a finishing time of 18:36. It is his eighth win and comes with a \$12,500 prize.

New this year, in honor of Shepherd Center's 50th anniversary, the name of the famously known Cardiac Hill, near Mile 3 of the race, was changed to

Hope Hill to reflect Shepherd's mission of helping people with a temporary or permanent disability caused by injury or disease rebuild their lives with hope, independence, and dignity.

"It is an especially meaningful year as Shepherd Center celebrates its 50th year and reflects on how our partnership with the Atlanta Track Club and the AJC Peachtree Road Race has been an integral part of our history — both in serving as a catalyst for the inclusion of athletes with disabilities and showing patients at Shepherd Center what's possible as they cheer on the athletes on race day out in front of Shepherd Center," said Rebecca Washburn, MS, manager of Shepherd Center's Beyond Therapy® and wellness programs.

Jim Thompson Named Board of Directors Chairman

On Aug. 18, Alana Shepherd, co-founder of Shepherd Center, announced the end of her tenure as Chairman of the Board of Directors. The board voted to install James "Jim" D. Thompson, former chair-elect and longtime supporter of Shepherd Center, as the new board chairman.

Alana served as board chairman for five years, taking over the position after her son and hospital co-founder James Shepherd passed away in 2019. James led the board as chairman for nearly 45 years.

Alana's tenure as chairman marked an eventful period for Shepherd Center. She led the board as the hospital navigated the COVID-19 pandemic, launched its largest-ever capital campaign, Pursuing Possible: The Campaign for Shepherd Center, constructed two new buildings, and celebrated its 50th anniversary. She will remain a member of the board.

Jim takes over the chairman position as Shepherd Center closes out its Pursuing Possible campaign and undergoes renovations to the main campus. Jim brings business and legal knowledge to the chairman position — he started his career as a captain in the United States Air Force Judge Advocate General's Corps (JAG Corps) and went on to work as a trial attorney before serving as CEO of several finance and insurance subsidiaries. He and his wife, Carol, have three children and nine grandchildren, and he has served on Shepherd's Board of Directors for 25 years.

Thank you to both Alana and Jim for your continued dedication and unwavering support of Shepherd Center!



Jim Thompson pictured with his wife, Carol. Jim has served as a board member for 25 years.

Best & Brightest

Shepherd Center Recognized as a Best Rehabilitation Hospital, Best Place to Work

Shepherd Center has again been named by U.S. News & World Report as a Best Hospital. In the rankings released in July, Shepherd Center ranked No. 13 in rehabilitation in U.S. News' 2025-2026 edition of Best Hospitals. U.S. News evaluated more than 4,400 hospitals across 15 adult specialties and 22 procedures and conditions; only 13% of evaluated hospitals earned a Best Hospitals designation.

Additionally, the hospital was once again recognized as a "Best Place to Work for Disability Inclusion" on the 2025 Disability Index, recognizing its commitment to advancing disability inclusion and building a workplace where all employees can contribute and drive long-term success. Shepherd Center is a top scorer, earning a 90 out of a possible 100 on the world's leading third-party benchmarking tool for evaluating corporate disability inclusion. It is used by hundreds of companies globally.



Why Does Shepherd Take Halloween So Seriously?

Hair-Raising Traditions Explained



By Teresa Weaver and Erin Kenney

Tina Turner was dancing so fiercely in the Disco of the Damned that LL Cool J had to caution her to save some energy for all the trick-or-treaters to come. Just down the hall, therapists helped people using walkers and wheelchairs move to the irresistible beat of the “Cupid Shuffle”— to the right, to the right, to the left, to the left. In a dramatically lit nook, Alana Shepherd donned a shawl to read Tarot cards and palms.

Ben Thrower, M.D., medical director of the Eula C. and Andrew C. Carlos Multiple Sclerosis Institute, started

this wildly popular Halloween tradition at Shepherd Center 20 years ago. Dressed as a demented ringleader, Dr. Thrower presides over a gauntlet of costumed staff members who have decorated every square inch of the MS Institute’s lobby, hallway, and infusion room.

“We begin planning in January for the upcoming year,” says Rebecca Duguid (aka Medusa), PT, DPT, program manager of the MS Institute. This annual Halloween party is a perfect fit for Shepherd’s culture, she says. “It’s fun, it’s focused on our patients, and it’s a team effort.”

But, the MS Haunted House isn’t the only spooky space at Shepherd Center. “Usually, we have competing haunted houses, but they’re very different,” says



Cathi Dugger, PT, who’s helped orchestrate the Adolescent Haunted House for 20 years. “It’s a good contrast, and we usually try to do it on different days.”



(Clockwise from left) Every Halloween, adolescent patients and their therapists dress up for their haunted house, where they incorporate all things creepy — from killer clowns to spiders. ▶ The costume contest has been a Halloween favorite for years — who do you spot in this photo from 2009? ▶ Hospital co-founder Alana Shepherd often takes part in the MS Haunted House — in 2024, billed as “THE Mrs. Shepherd,” she told fortunes. ▶ Paul “PJ” Henderson (left) shows off dance moves with Shepherd employees during the MS Haunted House. ▶ Hospital co-founder James Shepherd got in on the fun in 2009, when he was a part of a group costume that was a play on his surname and the hospital’s namesake.



one-way path through a series of creepy scenes, hanging cobwebs, and, of course, jump scares from adolescent patients and staff.

The haunted house gives patient the opportunity to practice their dexterity and motor skills by helping make props and set up. The event also helps the adolescent program form connections within the Atlanta community — they’ve partnered with Atlanta Sound and Lighting for professional-grade light and sound effects, and they once had the makeup artists from Netherworld provide spooky transformations for the participating patients.

Another tradition is the annual Halloween Costume Contest. Held in the cafeteria, tables and chairs are pushed aside to create a runway for participants — which include staff and patients in a variety of categories, like best group costume, best individual costume, and best patient/staff group costume.

Don’t let all the holiday fun be misleading — haunted houses and costume contests aren’t a way to blow off work or therapy sessions. For patients, these fun traditions can offer a break in the routine while still incorporating therapy goals. For staff, the day can be a way to decompress from the challenges they may face in their roles, all while building camaraderie within their teams and with other departments across the hospital.

“I love it when the other departments come [to the Adolescent Haunted House], because they get so scared,” Dugger says with a laugh. “It brings the whole hospital back to that family feeling that I really love.”

Some passages in this story came from Shepherd’s 50th anniversary book, “Mission Moments: 50 Years of Transforming Lives.”



Photos by Bita Honarvar and Shepherd Archives

The Adolescent Haunted House started as a way to incorporate some Halloween fun into therapy, playing games like “Cheesy Face,” where patients would throw cheese puffs at someone with a face full of shaving cream to see how many could stick. Now, with support from Andee’s Army, the event is more like a typical haunted house experience — a

Research Presents New Understanding of Disorders of the Self

Following a brain injury, some people may lack a sense of self — the feeling that their thoughts, emotions, and sensations belong to them. Shepherd Center researchers have studied the role the brain's right hemisphere plays in disorders of the self, and in August, the team's findings were published in Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation.

Brick Johnstone, Ph.D., the O. Wayne Rollins Director of Brain Injury Research at Shepherd Center, was the lead author on the study, which examined how the brain's right hemisphere helps link different mental processes to form a unified experience. The study found that when this process is disrupted, people may feel disconnected from their body, emotions, or surroundings.

The findings support a new way of understanding disorders of the self — not as isolated mental issues, but as disruptions in how the brain connects different experiences. This insight could lead to better ways of diagnosing and treating people who feel disconnected from themselves or the world around them.

Congratulations to Dr. Johnstone, as well as Raeda Anderson, Ph.D., and Andrew Dennison, M.D., for their work on the study.



(From left) Andrew Dennison, M.D. and Raeda Anderson, Ph.D., worked with Brick Johnstone, Ph.D. (not pictured) on a study about disorders of the self.

Using Fabrication Techniques to Enhance Rehab

During recovery, it's crucial to present patients with new ideas and strategies to help them navigate rehabilitation, while using patients' expertise to get back to the things they love. Learning new approaches is just as important for Shepherd staff members to improve patient and client outcomes and reenergize clinicians. That's why Shepherd Center's research and innovation department hosts a quarterly Innovation Hour.

During July's Innovation Hour, Atom Young, OTR/L, an occupational therapist in the Spinal Cord Injury Day Program, led a powerful presentation on innovation in therapy. Young presented how innovative fabrication techniques, such as woodworking, thermoplastics, metalworking, and car and equipment maintenance can boost patient engagement, build confidence, and improve mental health. By allowing patients to temporarily swap into a teaching role in their area of expertise,

clinicians can boost patient confidence and increase motivation to continue progressing towards functional outcomes.

From meaningful therapy ideas to



(Above) Zachary Cooley did woodworking activities as part of his occupational therapy. Incorporating fabrication techniques in therapy can boost patient engagement.

community-driven solutions, Young reminded attendees that creativity and collaboration aren't just encouraged at Shepherd — they are essential.

Best Health Suite Now Hosting Weekly Classes

The Best Health Suite in the Marcus Center for Advanced Rehabilitation is now hosting adaptive exercise classes three times a week. Offerings include adaptive strength, cardio, and yoga classes, which allow participants to build strength and mobility and practice mindfulness in a supportive and accessible environment. To see all class offerings and register for a spot, visit shepherd.org/events. For questions, please contact Marina Moldavskiy at marina.moldavskiy@shepherd.org.

Giving A Helping Hand

Director of Engineering William Davidson shares his Shepherd story

Interview by Dominique McPhearson



Photo by Bita Honarvar

We also handle moves and furniture, and help with patient outings when needed. We cover not just this campus but also off-site locations: Pathways, Spring Creek, the Arthur M. Blank Family Residences, and more.

We're mechanical, not clinical, but everything we do still contributes to the patients' care. Even something small, like changing a lightbulb in a patient's room, makes a difference. If it brings them comfort, then we've done our job.

You're known for getting involved in more than facilities work. What drives that?

I just love helping people. I love engaging with people. During Halloween and Christmas, I put decorations out in front of the engineering shop. I see families stop and take pictures. That brings some kind of joy into their life while they're dealing with so much here. That's what makes me happy.

Do you have a favorite memory since joining Shepherd?

Oh yeah — this is what I call my Shepherd Promise story. A few years back, I got a call about an elderly woman who was trying to change a flat tire in the parking deck. She didn't want to miss her husband's rehab session.

So, I found her, introduced myself, and said, 'Ma'am, I'd be more than happy to change that tire for you.' While I was doing it, we talked about life, family, and the world. Two weeks later, I got a thank-you letter from her. She had taken the time to get my name and address and send me a card. I still get teary-eyed talking about it.

Even just changing a tire, you can touch somebody in a way that sticks with them. That's the heart of Shepherd.

What do you want people to know about the engineering department at Shepherd?

People don't always realize how much property we cover. We're up to about 1.4 million square feet with the new buildings. I've got a team of 14, and we love what we do. We come in every day, work hard, and do it as a team. I tell folks: we're all spokes in a bicycle wheel. And when one of those spokes gets loose, the wheel doesn't turn right. So, we all stay tight together.

Responses have been edited for length and clarity.

How did you get started at Shepherd?

I worked [next door] at Piedmont Atlanta Hospital for 23 years. I started at the bottom as a maintenance tech because I love working with my hands. I worked my way up through Piedmont, all the way up through management. When the opportunity came my way for a director position here, I knew the history and culture, and I wanted a taste of that.

It was right in the middle of COVID. A lot of people were saying, 'You've been here 23 years, you want to take that risk?' But Shepherd's just a special place. I prayed about it. The next morning, the only thing on my mind was Shepherd. I looked up and said, 'Thank you, Lord. You helped me make that decision.' And it was the best decision of my life.

What does your role look like on a day-to-day basis?

We take care of the buildings — mechanical systems, plumbing, heating and air, electrical, painting, flooring — you name it.

- YEARS AT SHEPHERD: 5**
- TRAINING**
- Black Belt Certificate Program, Mercer University
- FUN FACTS**
- William is a self-taught drummer — he showed off his skills at last year's Shepherd's Got Talent.
 - He enjoys playing golf, fishing, and collecting Star Wars Legos.
 - His dad taught him how to fix up cars and work with his hands.

By Erin Kenney

In Good Hands

Jackson Drum's care team helps him through recovery with hope, humor, and heart

Photo by Bita Honarvar



Jackson pictured with members of his support system. (From left) Avery Blankenburg, Kelsey Lee, Deb Eldred, Jason Drum, Kelsey Shearman, and Chris Ready. You can learn more about his care team in the following pages.

A formidable hockey player, Jackson Drum knows a thing or two about teamwork.

"To me, teamwork is working to build a good environment," he says. "If you have that really good environment, where everyone is there to have fun and work hard, it's a lot better than being just one person. You're all trying to uplift each other."

He's made use of his experience as a team player — as well as his impressive work ethic, infectious positive energy, and sense of humor (not to mention sarcasm) — throughout his spinal cord injury (SCI) rehabilitation at Shepherd.

Jackson sustained a C1-C2 SCI during a hockey game in February. Originally from Minnesota, Jackson had been attending boarding school in Idaho — Coeur d'Alene Hockey Academy, known for its prestigious hockey program.

"What I really like about hockey is the physicality, and my teammates and coaches," he says. "The atmosphere playing at the prep school is a lot of fun — everyone is there to [take the game seriously]."

The team was playing a match in Vancouver, British Columbia, when Jackson had an awkward collision into the boards. Emergency responders rushed him to the hospital, where he had emergency surgery. Then, through the help of the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation, he made his way to Shepherd.

After months of navigating complex medical challenges, from feeding issues to getting weaned off the ventilator, Jackson started reaching milestones. He celebrated his 18th birthday. He came off the ventilator. He started going on

outings with other adolescents on his floor. He had his first therapy session in Shepherd's pool. He got a moment in the spotlight in Project Rollway, presenting the hospital's chief executive officer, Jamie Shepherd, and hospital co-founder Alana Shepherd, with special edition Nike Air Force 1s. He cheered on participants in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution Peachtree Road Race, and even got in on the excitement by taking his powerchair down to the Arthur M. Blank family residences to see his mom and sisters.

In the therapy gym, Jackson's been pouring the same level of

passion he has for hockey into his recovery — walking with the Zero G, building up his arm strength, and cuddling with the facility dogs any chance he can get. He says none of it would be possible without his care team — a small army of nurses, doctors, therapists, and other specialists with over 115 years of combined experience at Shepherd alone.

"Working with the team here — it's almost like hockey," Jackson says. "They're all uplifting, they've all created a good atmosphere, and they all want the best for you."



Meet Jackson's Team

including the nicknames they've earned from Jackson and the Shepherd community

Erica Drum

Role: Caregiver

Jackson's mom, Erica, has been by his side throughout his recovery. During his time at Shepherd, she's stayed in the Blank Family Residences — while sometimes spending the night in Jackson's hospital room when he's had a particularly hard day. She hasn't been intimidated by the medical side of Jackson's care.

Instead, she's learned as much as she can from his team and in Shepherd's extensive family training, while also keeping Jackson's hockey community up to date on his progress through the Facebook page: 97's Journey.



#97's #1 Fan



Jack of all Trades

Jason Drum

Role: Caregiver

Jackson's dad, Jason, has been at Shepherd for several of Jackson's recovery milestones, like his 18th birthday and his first time getting in the pool. But when he's not at Shepherd, Jason has been holding down the fort at the Drum household in Minnesota, taking care of Jackson's three younger sisters and managing their busy schedules. He's also started working on accessibility improvements to their house — including widened doorways, wheelchair ramps, and improved temperature control — so it's ready for Jackson's return this fall.

Katie Beck | RN

Years at Shepherd: 3
Role: Nurse

Katie works closely with patients, nurse practitioners, and doctors, ensuring patients have their needs met. She looks out for Jackson, making sure during shift change that incoming nurses know what makes him comfortable, any issues he's had that day, and his personality quirks (for example, Jackson is a very, very hard sleeper). As Jackson's medical challenges eased, she prepared him for more days in the therapy gym, and fewer days in his room. "I told him, 'You'll see less of me, and that's a good thing,'" she says.

The Protector



The Adventurer



Avery Blankenburg | MS, CTRS

Years at Shepherd: 4
Role: Recreation Therapist

As a recreation therapist, Avery helps patients get back to the things they love and return to their communities with confidence, and she has big plans for Jackson. Since he arrived at Shepherd, he's been on many outings, like going to Target for new pajamas or going to Onward Reserve to pick out his Project Rollway outfit. Avery has also organized bigger outings with Jackson, like a trip to the Georgia Aquarium. Soon, Avery plans to do an airport outing with him, so he's prepared to board a plane for his flight back home to Minnesota.

Wes Chay | M.D.

Years at Shepherd: 8
Role: Psychiatrist

Dr. Chay's interest in medicine began early, inspired by visits to his grandfather's OB-GYN practice in Taiwan. Now, as the psychiatrist on Jackson's team, he leads the interdisciplinary group in navigating complex medical challenges. Working closely with Artica Jackson, NP, he evaluates patients, guides diagnostic workup and treatment, and coordinates with consultants for care at Shepherd Center or surgeries next door at Piedmont Atlanta Hospital. Beyond problem-solving, Dr. Chay helps make sure Jackson has what he needs to succeed in therapy, collaborating with the rehabilitation team on any medical issues that might impact daily sessions.

The Game Planner



Martha DeReimer

RRT

Years at Shepherd: 3
Role: Respiratory Therapist

Martha became a respiratory therapist because of an experience at Shepherd — her mom and sister both worked at the hospital, and she got an opportunity to shadow RTs on patient floors. Right away, she was hooked. Now, Martha helps patients like Jackson with breathing, and if appropriate, ventilator weaning. She knows coming off a ventilator can be anxiety-inducing, which is why she takes into account individual patient needs and preferences to tailor treatment to them, even if that means adjusting the pace of vent weaning.

The Advocate



Deb Eldred | SLP

Years at Shepherd: 17
Role: Speech-Language Pathologist

Deb met Jackson on his second day at Shepherd, when he was still in the Intensive Care Unit. As a speech-language pathologist, she helps with more than speaking — she also supports patients with eating, drinking, and cognitive challenges they may face when communicating or writing. She's worked with Jackson to navigate speaking both on and off his ventilator, and she organized one of his first Shepherd outings to Shake Shack, so Jackson could have his first milkshake since his injury.



The Coordinator

Shannon Grizzle | LCSW, CCM

Years at Shepherd: 3
Role: Case Manager

Shannon has used her master's in social work across the medical field — working as a therapist in adult psychiatry units, an emergency room crisis worker, and as a medical case manager. Out of everywhere she's been, she says Shepherd Center is the most person-centered, something she loves. She has worked closely with Jackson and his family, from helping them get settled in upon admission through planning for discharge. She's especially enjoyed working with Jackson's mom, Erica. "Through it all, his mom has been the most positive person. She's such a joy to work with," she says.



"Antarctica"

Artica Jackson | NP

Years at Shepherd: 13
Role: Advanced Practice Provider

After working as a night shift nurse for 15 years, Artica started her role as a nurse practitioner on the same floor. Working closely with Dr. Chay, she manages patients' medical needs. Sometimes patients will call her "Dr. Jackson," but she cautions that she's a nurse practitioner, not an M.D. The main difference? "Many years of schooling!" she says with a laugh. When she's not setting up appointments with specialists and reviewing medication lists, she's probably joking around with patients or dreaming up the perfect prank... watch out, Jackson!



"Derb"

Kelsey Lee | OT

Years at Shepherd: 7
Role: Occupational Therapist

Kelsey helps patients perform daily activities like taking a shower or brushing their teeth, while also getting them back to the things they enjoy, in Jackson's case, hockey. Like Jackson, she hails from the Midwest, resulting in a lot of sarcasm and "tough love" in therapy sessions, she says. One of her favorite parts of her job is collaborating with the other professionals on her floor. "One of the coolest parts of Shepherd is that you work on a team ... it's not always like that in other settings," she says. "Being able to talk through some medical stuff with speech, with PT, with Dr. Chay, just to learn more about what was going on with Jackson, was really helpful."



"Special K"

Cheryl Linden

MA, LPC; MS, OT/L

Years at Shepherd: 37
Role: Counselor

Cheryl started at Shepherd as an occupational therapist, but now, she offers a different kind of support for patients. As a counselor, Cheryl helps patients and families navigate emotional and mental health challenges after injury or illness. Counselors at Shepherd are a key part of the team — every patient meets with a psychologist, which Cheryl says can reduce stigma and aid in navigating mental health concerns during recovery. Cheryl also serves as the emcee for Project Rollway, where she told the audience Jackson's story as he enjoyed the spotlight. Turn to page 26 for more on this year's Project Rollway.



The Supporter

Chris Ready | PT

Years at Shepherd: 10
Role: Physical Therapist

Because of medical complications, Jackson has had some hard days at Shepherd. But once those complications were out of his way, Jackson was ready to hit the gym with his PT, Chris, as his sidekick. As a physical therapist, Chris helps patients independently get from point A to point B, whether that's transferring from a wheelchair to a car or safely using a walker to get around. But as a PT in the adolescent program, he also knows sometimes that kids need to be kids — whether that's just doing a workout in the gym or hanging out with other teens on the floor.

The Workout Partner



The Teacher



Kelsey Shearman | Ph.D.

Years at Shepherd: 16
Role: Academic Coordinator

As Jackson started his rehabilitation at Shepherd, he also had non-medical challenges to face, like Algebra 2. Kelsey worked with Jackson, like she does with other adolescent patients, to ensure he stayed on top of his schoolwork while recovering from his injury. She also serves as a liaison between Jackson, his parents, and his school, keeping an open line of communication. She helps students avoid potential snags by arranging accommodations with their schools, like obtaining an extension for Jackson to wrap up his algebra class despite missing several weeks of instruction.

Julie Shepherd | CCM, CLCP, LMSW

Years at Shepherd: 16
Role: Director of Founding Family Relations & Canine Therapy Program Lead

Julie leads the hospital's facility dog program, which boasts seven highly trained pups. Through activities like brushing, petting, practicing commands, and leash management, the dogs give patients opportunities to increase strength and dexterity, practice cognitive skills, and gain experience using mobility aids like wheelchairs and walkers. Jackson is a big fan of the dogs, and while his 18th birthday wish of a facility dog slumber party in his room couldn't exactly come true, Julie made sure to surprise him with Jaxx and Francisco in the gym, bringing some birthday cheer to his therapy session.



"Jules"

Philip Wexler | M.D.

Years at Shepherd: 5
Role: Medical Director, Pulmonology and Respiratory Therapy

Dr. Wexler heard about Jackson before his arrival at Shepherd — his family used to live in Boston, and his wife has kept in touch with the close-knit hockey community they formed there. When Jackson arrived, Dr. Wexler wanted to help create a supportive, tight-knit, hockey-like atmosphere where Jackson could be himself. The two have a special bond — Dr. Wexler helped Jackson with his ventilator weaning, and now, he's working to make sure Jackson has a strong cough, which he'll need to tackle any future illnesses he may face.

"Big W"



The Family



Shepherd Team

Jackson shares a special bond with these members of his team, but they're only a fraction of his full Shepherd support system — it would take this whole magazine, and then some, to cover the impact each staff member, volunteer, and donor has on patients like Jackson. From nutrition services to assistive technology, family housing to environmental services, peer support to research, financial services to the Shepherd Foundation, everyone plays a role in patient recovery, helping patients like Jackson find hope after injury or illness.

Editor's Note: When this story was written in July 2025, Jackson was nearing the end of his time as an inpatient after over six months of rehabilitation. Jackson completed additional rehab in the Spinal Cord Injury Day Program before heading home to Minnesota in late September.

From Rehab to Rugby

Unexpected journey helps Lilburn, Georgia, native see his life in a new light

By Phillip Jordan



To understand how far Jonathan Horna has come since his life-altering car accident in 2021, you need to know that horrific crash is now only the second-most impactful hit of his life. The first?

That came about a year and a half later, when Jonathan rolled onto the wheelchair rugby court at Shepherd Center for his first taste of a high-contact sport famously nicknamed murderball.

"Oh, man, when we started running that first play, I immediately got slammed into — you know, 'teach the rookie how it is,'" Jonathan says with a laugh. "My first thought was 'wow, what just happened?' But it was exhilarating. I didn't expect to ever get back into truly competitive sports again, so that was a huge moment. It changed so much for me in terms of my confidence and who I could be once again."

Jonathan, now 25, was a med student and a member of Georgia State University's soccer team back in 2021. On Feb. 17 of that year, another vehicle collided into Jonathan's car. The accident resulted in a litany of injuries for the student, including an L1 spinal cord injury. After surgeries at Atlanta's Grady Memorial Hospital — including the amputation of his left leg at the knee — Jonathan arrived at Shepherd Center in March of 2021.

The physical challenges were intense, Jonathan explains. But they were nothing compared to the mental and emotional hurdles he faced.

"I was used to being the helper," Jonathan says. "When my parents needed something, I did it well, and fast. When I could help at church, I did that. That's who I liked to be — for them, for myself, for everyone around me."

"Suddenly being put in this completely different situation, it was a little bit humiliating. What I had to learn was taking that humiliation and turning it into humility instead. To understand that I wasn't on my own. And to understand that there are times when you have to let others be there for you."

Jonathan says he couldn't have flipped that switch mentally without the support of his family, his home church at Holy Cross

Photo by Bita Honarvar



Catholic Church, in Tucker, Georgia, and especially his Shepherd Center care team. "From the nurses to the therapists and chaplains, they all helped a lot with the mental side of things," Jonathan says. "They got me going, got me

active, helped change my mindset."

Most importantly, he says, "They were super open to someone who was very closed off."

Slowly, Jonathan started to open up once again — talking, sharing, being vulnerable. The peer support of his fellow patients was a big part of that progress, too.

"Just being around other young people going through similar things," he says. "I remember at the beginning, there was no way to hide and mope. The other patients would just come and say, 'Hey, new kid, what are you in here for?'"

"When I look back, I realize it was a beautiful experience, a stepping stone to where I am now. That time in my life is an essential part of who I am now and what I plan to keep pursuing."

And, yes, those pursuits now include playing for the Shepherd Smash, Shepherd Center's quad rugby team.

"It's funny because I wasn't very good with my hands before, which is why I did soccer!" Jonathan says. "So, especially with limited functionality post-injury, I can't believe I said 'yes' to even trying it. But it spoke to me. It's an amazing sport, an amazing team here at Shepherd Center, and amazing resources all around you. Quad rugby is something I couldn't live without now."

Jonathan is also moving forward in other areas of life. He's volunteering at his church, teaching youth catechism. He's also got a new vision for his career, having just earned an associate's degree in accounting and now heading back to Georgia State for his bachelor's. He's ready for GSU's vast downtown campus, too. With the aid of a new "smart prosthetic" and continued physical therapy, he's progressed to walking only with the aid of a hand crutch.

"I have so much to thank Shepherd for everything they've done," Jonathan says. "To be honest, realizing that a place like Shepherd Center even existed in my time of need was bizarre. I couldn't believe there was a place like that, with all those resources and experts, it really was unbelievable at first. It's so heartwarming to be able to let go and know you're not alone. That you're surrounded by people who are there for you." *

(Clockwise from left) Jonathan now walks using a "smart prosthetic" and hand crutch. ► Rugby has been a crucial part of Jonathan's recovery. He's #12 for the Shepherd Smash. ► Jonathan and other rugby players gather on the sidelines during a match in 2023. ► Jonathan pictured with rugby teammate James Tolbert.



Shepherd Alums:

On a Mission

By Sara Baxter and By Damjana Alverson

Deltrick Elmore

Atlanta, Georgia

Deltrick Elmore says the best decision he ever made was adopting his Belgian Malinois puppy “Bear” four years ago. The second one, he says, was taking part in Shepherd’s SHARE Military Initiative.

Deltrick enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1995, where he worked as a generator mechanic and later in explosive ordnance disposal. He left after three years and joined the Navy. After discharge, he served in the Army National Guard on and off from 2003 to 2019. While in the National Guard, he also worked as a consultant to Army bases and traveled around the world, helping plan tactical operations. It was during this time — including a stint at a base in Afghanistan — that he was involved in several explosions from enemy fire.

“At one point, I got blown across the chow hall,” Deltrick remembers.

He returned to the U.S. in 2019. He didn’t realize it at the time, but he had sustained injuries that caused long-term physical and mental symptoms during his time overseas. He had severe headaches and began noticing a decline in his cognitive abilities, slower reflexes, and shaky hands. He had bouts of depression and attempted suicide.

He sought counseling to combat his depression, but he couldn’t find relief for his physical symptoms. In 2024, he experienced a seizure, which revealed an undiagnosed traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder. His doctor referred him to SHARE.

“I didn’t want to go at first,” admits Deltrick, who came to SHARE in January 2025. “I didn’t think it would help. But it helped a lot.”

He was at SHARE for two months, where he got relief for his headaches and worked on balance, memory, and decision-making skills. Playing the piano and working in the vegetable garden during recreation therapy helped calm the shaking in his hands.

After he left SHARE, Deltrick returned to his job as a cyber security engineer. He says he is calmer and happier. He appreciates the treatment he received at SHARE as well as the camaraderie he felt with the other clients.

“SHARE is a community where nobody judges you,” Deltrick says. “I thought I was going through this process alone, but they pull you in immediately. We cheered each other on. It was the best thing I’ve done so far.” Besides adopting Bear, of course.



Avani Patel

Duluth, Georgia

Avani Patel, 47, is an artist, a business owner, a mother, and a wife. She is someone who loves to stay busy and help others. And, as of April 2023, she is a multiple stroke survivor.

On April 29, 2023, Avani experienced two strokes, and she learned she had a large aneurysm that needed to be fixed surgically.

“During surgery, blood clots formed and caused me to have multiple additional strokes that left me paralyzed. I couldn’t move or walk or project my voice,” Avani recalls.

Avani came to Shepherd Center’s Brain Injury Rehabilitation Program, where her team of inpatient therapists worked with her to improve her fine motor, gross motor, and cognitive skills.

Avani completed inpatient therapy just in time to attend her son’s 10th birthday on September 25. The following week, she began Shepherd Pathways, Shepherd’s outpatient and residential rehabilitation program for people recovering from brain injuries and strokes.

“Pathways was amazing,” Avani says. “They connected with my individual needs and geared all my therapies to returning to my daily routine. They made me at ease.”

Among the life skills that Avani wanted to practice was bracelet threading to participate in an important tradition in her faith that also taps into her passion for art.

“In Hinduism, we celebrate brother/sister day, or Rakhi. Sisters tie bracelets on brothers or brother figures in their lives telling them that we are here to protect them and give them good blessings, and in return, they protect us back,” Avani explains. “You can buy them, but I think it’s special to make them for loved ones.”

While it takes her longer than it did pre-stroke, she has now returned to making up to 14 of these intricate, hand beaded bracelets each year.

Today, Avani continues to have regular check-ins with her doctors and psychologist at Shepherd Center. After taking a year off work, she is back to serving as CFO of her home health business, Azalea Home Care, Inc.

“I have an amazing support system,” Avani says. “My husband and family have been my rock throughout this. And I appreciate every single person at Shepherd. Shepherd will always be part of my life, and I’m grateful for that.”



Loranne Ausley

Tallahassee, Florida

Loranne Ausley remembers going to sleep on Nov. 1, 2024, in anticipation of competing in Ironman Florida — her sixth Ironman competition — in Panama City the next day. She doesn’t remember anything past that — until she woke up at Shepherd Center three weeks later.

Loranne was injured in the bike segment of the race. Unsure of exactly what happened, she believes her tires hit something in the road, causing her to fly over the handlebars. She sustained a spinal cord injury, a traumatic brain injury, and a broken collarbone. After three weeks at Ascension Sacred Heart Emergency Care and Trauma Center in Panama City — where she was unconscious for several days and underwent neck surgery — she was transferred to Shepherd Center on Nov. 24.

Loranne had a tracheotomy and a feeding tube. Her right arm was virtually unmovable due to nerve damage to the brachial plexus. She used a wheelchair for the first few weeks. During therapy, she worked on regaining her strength, balance, memory, and executive functioning skills.

As an athlete, attorney, former Florida state legislator and community volunteer, Loranne was used to keeping a fast pace and working hard. She had to learn to take baby steps.

“I had to set small goals,” she says. “My main goal was to get back to running races. That was my life.”

After nearly two months at Shepherd Center, Loranne returned home on Jan. 9, 2025, to continue her rehabilitation. A victory came when she ran for the first time with her physical therapist next to her. In March, she completed a 10K race.

The successes continued as she regained her independence. She returned to her board post at the Institute for Child Success and was able to travel alone to a board meeting in Washington, D.C., in April. She’ll take over as board chair for the nonprofit in January 2026.

Loranne has promised her husband she will not get on a bike again. But she continues to run and swim, and believes there is still a marathon in her future. In August, she completed a 20-mile hike in Wyoming with friends.

She is still working on regaining full mobility in her arm as well as balance issues, but is grateful for how far she’s come.

“I give a lot of credit to Shepherd Center for getting me where I am right now,” she says. “I made incredible improvements there. It’s an amazing place that helps people in very difficult times.”



Grayson Pope

Trussville, Alabama

Grayson Pope, 19, graduated high school in May with a 3.9 GPA and started attending the University of Tennessee (UT) as part of its baseball team this past summer. Although he’s not playing on the team, he will be helping them in a coaching role, living in the dorms, exercising with the team, and making lasting memories.

“It means so much to be on the baseball team,” Grayson says. “They have been so supportive of me since my accident and being able to give back and help out with the program means the world.”

On June 6, 2023, while playing golf with friends, a pop-up storm hit the course. As Grayson drove back toward the clubhouse, a large oak tree fell on him, causing a severe traumatic brain injury.

He spent 42 days in UAB Hospital’s ICU in a coma before transferring to Shepherd Center’s Disorders of Consciousness Program. After four days, he moved to the inpatient Brain Injury Rehabilitation Program.

“When we first got to Shepherd on July 17, Grayson couldn’t walk, talk, or eat on his own. All his goals revolved around baseball and being part of the game again,” says Jamie Pope, Grayson’s mom.

Grayson’s team of doctors, nurses, and therapists worked with him to incorporate baseball into his therapy. He recalls practicing on the Zero-G Gait and Balance System for safe mobility training.

“I practiced hitting a ball and running while I was attached to the Zero-G. It has straps that can control the tension and helped me stand up without falling.”

The recreation therapy team also took Grayson to a Braves game, where they toured the facility and met some players. “It was a great experience,” Jamie says. “There’s so much hope at Shepherd. They will forever have a special place in my family’s heart.”

Grayson completed the inpatient program able to walk again and began Shepherd Pathways outpatient program, where there was an intensive focus on making sure he was ready to return to day-to-day life and school.

Despite the challenges he faced, Grayson discharged from Shepherd on Nov. 17, 2023, able to function independently again. He went on to continue therapy closer to home while finishing his junior and senior years of high school on time with his friends.

“Baseball taught me you will fail more than you will succeed, but that is okay. Never give up, and you will learn from it and get better the next day,” Grayson reflects. “I am excited to start the next chapter of my life at UT.”



Project Rollway is on a Mission

Adolescent Patients Hit the Stage in Style

By Erin Kenney

When Braxton Davis kicked off this year's Project Rollway, he strutted onto the stage wearing an astronaut helmet. More than a silly prop, the helmet was a nod to this year's theme, On a Mission, which incorporated space-themed decorations while tying with the hospital-wide theme for Shepherd Center's 50th anniversary.

Another 50th anniversary celebration took place on the runway when model Jackson Drum, a spinal cord injury patient, presented special edition Nike Air Force 1s to hospital cofounder Alana Shepherd and chief executive officer Jamie Shepherd, MBA, MHA, FACHE. The customized sneakers, which feature bold Shepherd gold and blue, were designed by the adolescent program to mark the hospital's 50th anniversary.



This year's event also marked the end of an era, with event co-chair Ashley Kim, MPT, ATC, announcing that the evening would be her last time organizing the event after eight years.

"My favorite part is the fact that it's a huge collaborative effort, especially on the day of," says Kim, who worked in the Adolescent Spinal Cord Injury Day Program for nearly 18 years. "It's a shared activity between brain injury and spinal cord injury. So it brings the programs together, which means it brings the staff together, it brings the patients together."

Kim has moved into an outpatient therapy role, but Project Rollway will still be in good hands as Cathi Dugger, PT, DPT, a therapy manager in the Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation Program, plans

to lead the charge next year. Dugger led the first Project Rollway in 2014, and has continued to be an integral part of the Adolescent Committee.

For information on how to support Project Rollway or other adolescent programs, you can visit foundation.shepherd.org. And save the date for next year's Project Rollway on June 26, 2026. ✨



Photos by Laura Barnard



(Clockwise from left) Cheryl Linden (right) reaches to hug Ashley Kim following the show. After eight years, Kim is hanging up her Project Rollway director's hat. ► Jaylin Shuck gets her makeup done before the show. She was at Shepherd Center in spring 2024 following a stroke. ► Jamie Shepherd holds up the special edition Nike sneakers presented during the show. He and Alana Shepherd have been spotted wearing their new kicks around the hospital. ► Weston Woods takes the stage alongside physical therapist Brian Tanner. Weston, a 14-year-old from Ohio, came to Shepherd in January for spinal cord injury rehab.

Thank You

to our models, their families, Shepherd Center staff, and everyone who made this event possible!

And a special thank you to Ashley Kim, for eight years of leading Project Rollway, as well as all our event attendees and sponsors.

Donors

Andee's Army
Gas South
Atlanta Sound and Lighting
Haug Barron Law Group

Graphic Designer

Eight Ball Creative by Austin Jones

Photographers

Laura Barnard
Drew Oswald

Clothing Partners

Elk Head Clothing
London Trading Company
Patagonia
Onward Reserve
Megan Huntz

Hair & Makeup Specialists

Sam Henry
Morgan Hughes
Kaitlyn Radler
Dani Maslaney
Alyssa Attridge
Tati Hayton
Christel Irick
Krystia Stokes

DJ

Jewels Beats

Community Reunited

Adolescent Reunion Brings Together Old Friends

While Project Rollway participants wowed attendees in the Livingston Gym, across the hospital driveway former adolescent patients gathered to reconnect with each other, Shepherd staff members, and to cheer on the rollway models.

On June 27, the fifth Adolescent Reunion kicked off downstairs in the Marcus Center for Advanced Rehabilitation. Started in 2010 to allow former adolescent patients to maintain their Shepherd community, the reunion happens every three to five years. Deb Eldred, SLP, the speech language pathologist on the SCI adolescent team, has organized the last three reunions.

"It's amazing to see the connections that are formed while patients and families are at Shepherd Center — but even more inspiring to witness those relationships continue and grow years later."



Former patient Kamari Smith snaps a selfie with former SCI patient Brooklynn Chambers (center back row, wearing glasses) and staff members of the adolescent program.

The next morning, the festivities continued with a brunch at Shepherd and a trip to the Atlanta Braves game. The Braves not only won their game, but also hit a grand slam, creating an especially memorable moment for the attendees. The next adolescent reunion is scheduled for 2028. ✨



Adventure Skills Workshop

Attendees at this year's Adventure Skills Workshop (ASW) test the water. The annual three-day event is one of the Recreation Therapy Program's most popular events, where participants can try outdoor activities ranging from waterskiing to ziplining. To register for an event near you, visit shepherd.org/treatment/services-clinics/recreation-therapy or scan the QR code.



Photo by Joann Vitelli

Seeing the Support

Derby Day Celebrates Shepherd's 50th Anniversary

By Erin Kenney

Just moments before Shepherd Center's annual Derby Day festivities were to start, staff and vendors setting up for the event let out a sigh of relief as gray clouds rolled into the distance.

"I feel like someone up above was looking out for us," says Mary McDaniel, this year's Derby Day event chair. "I kid you not, the weather turned a positive corner 10 minutes before the event started, and the rain came again 15 minutes after it ended."

Whether a small miracle or a stroke of luck, attendees at this year's event dodged the rain and instead enjoyed an afternoon of festivities and entertainment, including casino games, custom-made fascina-tors by Love Blossoms, bourbon cream tasting from Doc Brown Farm & Distillers and jewelry from Kendra Scott. A silent auc-tion including a Saks Fifth Avenue shopping spree, dinners from Pricci and Yeppa, and vacation options to the beach or the mountains. Of course, the highlight of the day was watching the horses in this year's race, including the winner, Sovereignty, and fan favorites Journalism and Sandman.

Always a cheerful event, this year's Derby Day had a par-ticularly celebratory feel, as activities and decorations reflected Shepherd Center's 50th anniversary. Lisa Ruger, Shepherd's Cause and Community Engagement Manager, led the planning for the event.



(Clockwise from left) Meredith Forrester, a member of Shepherd's Board of Trustees, poses for a photo with hospital co-founder Alana Shepherd. ▶ Attendees enjoyed a day of festivities at Chastain Horse Park. ▶ Shepherd Center staff and community members wore their most dapper Derby attire for the event.



This year's event raised over \$273,000 for Shepherd Center's Recreation Therapy Program. This cornerstone program engages patients in adaptive activities and community reintegration outings to prepare them for fulfilling, meaningful living back home. Whether a patient is trying out a new activity or learning new ways to enjoy a life-long hobby, therapists work closely with them to help them reach their goals and return to their communities with confidence after injury or illness.

In addition to the money raised, Mary says the event is one of her favorites because it unifies Shepherd supporters, staff members, and former patients across age ranges. "It just blew me away, how it all came together," Mary says. "I had several friends who said, 'This is such a fun event — I can't believe I haven't done this before.' Derby Day lets you see the support Shepherd has from the broader community in all age groups." *

Photos by William Twitty

2025 Committee Members

Will Akers, Alyssa Baskam, Dana and Eric Bernath, Lauren and Greg Cohen, Elizabeth and Travis Cook, Courtney Dabbiere, Dixon and Greg Dunavant, Kari and John Dunn, Meredith and Jeremy Forrester, Svea Hall, Lauren and Nick Hendricks, Cory Jackson, Meredith and Dan Kingsley, Mary Lorraine and Preston McDonald, Elizabeth and Chris Morris, Kristine and John Ozug, Amy and Alex Panos, Elizabeth Pearce, Ashley Ashkouti Riad and Magd Riad, April and John Rooker, Blake Segars, Clyde Shepherd, Sarah and Jamie Shepherd, Julie Shepherd, Rachel Simononis, Meredith and Wesley Snapp, Kimberly and Steve Spitz, Anna and Kurt Stephens, Laura and Trammell Summers, Abby and Matt Wilson

DERBY DAY 2025

SPONSORS

Presenting Sponsor

VOYLES
AUTOMOTIVE

Triple Crown Sponsors

AGC Georgia Young Leadership Program
Avenue Catering/Saratoga Events

Butler Prather, LLC
Elaine and John Carlos
Chastain Horse Park
The Conlan Company

Pete and Shannon Shoemaker
Woo Cosmetics

Platinum Sponsors

Kari and John Dunn
Gas Motorcars
Robyn and Tony Marzullo

Mary and Mike McDaniel
Schreeder, Wheeler & Flint, LLP
Synovus

Mike Werner Law
West Paces Racing, LLC
Abby and Matt Wilson

Blue Ribbon Sponsors

The Baer Firm
Batchelor & Kimball
Sarah Batts
Bone Solutions, Inc.
Brown & Co. Jewelers
Courtney Dabbiere
Susi and Walt Driver

Meredith and Jeremy Forrester
Gas South
Hive Financial Assets
IMA Financial Group
Kate and Patrick Keough
Kristine and John Ozug
Elizabeth Pearce

Pittman Construction
Sarah and Jamie Shepherd
Pete and Shannon Shoemaker
Spitz Neurosurgery
Yates Insurance
Yeppa & Co
ZWJ Investment Counsel

Gold Cup Sponsors

AdvaLife Solutions
Bailey Javins & Carter, LLC
Dana and Eric Bernath
Sara and Andrew Bernhardt
Complete Medical Management
Convatec
Marla Eastwood
Lora and Geoff Fishman
Forvis Mazars

The Leonard and Jerry Greenbaum Family Foundation
Trey Harrell
Tracy and Justin Henry
Ryan Hoyt
Meredith and Dan Kingsley
Twinker and Keith Mason
Elizabeth and Chris Morris
Amy and Alex Panos
Ashley and Magd Riad
The Service Fort

Alana Shepherd
Clyde Shepherd
Julie Shepherd
Shiver Hamilton Campbell
Elizabeth and Boynton Smith
Meredith and Wesley Snapp
Snapper Industrial Products
Kimberly and Dr. Steven Spitz
Laura and Trammell Summers
Kara and Trey Weatherly

Silver Cup Sponsors

Tom Aderhold
Will Akers
Alyssa Baskam
Mara and Justin Berman
Allison and Andrew Blaisdell
Cade Therapy Services
Jim Calise
Sara and Donnie Chapman

Kristin and Clark Dean
Susannah and John Dryman
Guardian Neuro
Svea Hall
Heart 2 Heart Healthcare, LLC
Valerie and Robert Krause
LifeWard
Wesley Lovvorn

Mary Lorraine and Preston McDonald
Shari McDowell
Patrick McShane
The Peach Pit
Jill and John Seymour
Carol and Jim Thompson
Anne and Andrew Worrell

Pickle for a Purpose

First Annual Pickleball Tournament Raises \$20,000 for Shepherd

By Erin Kenney

Ever since Darren Ross' wife was a patient at Shepherd Center ten years ago, giving back to the hospital has become the family's mission. While looking to turn a client event into a fundraiser for Shepherd, Ross, an executive at Atlanta-based Colliers International, found inspiration in his new hobby: pickleball.

"I started playing a lot of pickleball, actually, and it just hit me one day. I was like, 'Man, we should have a pickleball tournament,'" says Ross, a newly appointed member of Shepherd's board of trustees. "Once we decided on that idea, it really grew on its own."

Colliers International hosted the event at Painted Pickle, where they sold tickets for people to compete in the tournament as well as event sponsorships. The event included many of Colliers' clients as well as other real estate professionals, allowing attendees to catch up with old acquaintances while raising money for a good cause. With pickleball at the center, guests enjoyed catching up while getting in some fun and fitness, Ross says.



(From left) Sintra Constant, Darren Ross, Sean Boswell, Georgeann Bartley, and Harrison Marsteller.

"I had a bunch of folks come up and just say how they really appreciated seeing folks that they hadn't seen in a long time, and getting out and doing something fun and competitive," he says. "All of that combined created a great event. And I had multiple people tell me they hope we do it again next year."

The event raised over \$22,000 for Shepherd Center's Recreation Therapy Program, and Ross is already thinking about hosting the event again next year, possibly with more competition slots and sponsorship opportunities, to benefit Shepherd's patients, families, and community members. *

Kids Shaping Shepherd

New Foundation Group Engages Shepherd's Youngest Supporters

By Erin Kenney

Kids Shaping Shepherd is the newest fundraising group supporting the hospital's patients and families, all with the help of kids ages 8 to 18 years old.

Since beginning in April, the group has over 100 participating families including 200 kids. As part of the program, each family donates \$250 while engaging in monthly programming. So far, the families have created plant arrangements and guest books for apartments in the Arthur M. Blank Family Residences. Future programming ideas include hosting movie nights in the gym, organizing ice cream socials, and helping with family dinners.

Shepherd Center's new stewardship associate, Faith Strumlauf, joined the Foundation team in July to help lead the new initiative.

"We're really excited," she says. "[The program's first year]

will be a year of learning, and I have a lot of experience working with kids and families, so that's something I'm really excited to implement into this role."

Memberships are closed for 2025, but to join next year, you can reach out to Faith at faith.strumlauf@shepherd.org. *



(Right) During one of the group's first activities, families worked on plant arrangements for the apartments at the Arthur M. Blank Family Residences. ▶ (Above) Kids Shaping Shepherd will engage a new, younger generation of Shepherd supporters.



Phyllicia Thomas shared her story of recovery with the crowd and was met with an ovation.



Photos by Heather Hercher

Board Members Celebrate "Mission Moments"

Joint Board Meeting Doubles As Private Book Launch

By Erin Kenney

Shepherd Center's board members gift their time and expertise to the hospital year-round, and at this year's joint board meeting, each board member got a small token of appreciation — a copy of "Mission Moments: 50 Years of Changing Lives," a coffee table book celebrating the hospital's 50th anniversary. Each copy was signed by hospital leadership: co-founders Alana Shepherd and David Apple, Chief Executive Officer Jamie Shepherd, Chief Medical Officer Michael Yochelson, and Director of Founding Family Relations Julie Shepherd.

Attendees at the event also enjoyed a presentation with the book's authors, veteran Atlanta journalists Gayle White and Teresa K. Weaver, led by Vice President of Marketing and Communications Jo Tapper. White and Weaver answered questions about the writing process and the most impactful experiences of working on the book.

Another highlight of the evening was hearing from former brain injury patient Phyllicia Thomas, who was injured in June 2020. After 28 days in a minimally conscious state, Phyllicia emerged and immediately began preparations to return to the Emory University School of Law, where she had just completed her first year. After nearly a year of intensive rehabilitation, Phyllicia returned to school and graduated with her law degree in 2024.

In addition to celebrating the launch of "Mission Moments" and hearing Phyllicia's story, board members celebrated progress of the past year, especially the success of Pursuing Possible: The Campaign for Shepherd Center, and prepared for the year ahead, including more anniversary celebrations and renovations at the main hospital. *

Celebrating Milestones

Book Launch Celebrates 50th Anniversary and Honors Tammy King

By Erin Kenney

There is no shortage of monumental moments to celebrate from Shepherd's 50-year history, from historical milestones like the 1996 Paralympics to everyday achievements, like a patient reaching a therapy goal. "Mission Moments," a commemorative book celebrating Shepherd Center's 50th anniversary, celebrates these moments, and in May, staff, patients, and visitors gathered to grab a copy of their own.

At the book launch party, guests could buy copies of the book signed by hospital co-founders Alana Shepherd and David Apple, plus Jamie and Julie Shepherd, and Chief Medical Officer Michael Yochelson.

Then, book co-authors Gayle White and Teresa Weaver participated in a short Q&A session. The book launch also featured a special program honoring Tammy King, Shepherd's former chief nursing officer. The Georgia Hospital Association awarded King its prestigious Hospital Hero Award, recognizing her passion for nursing and her 47 years of service at Shepherd. You can read more about King, and dozens of other Shepherd staff members, patients, and community members, in "Mission Moments," available in the apothecary, online, and as a digital e-book at shepherd.org/mission-moments. *



Tammy King, Shepherd's former chief nursing officer, holds up her Georgia Hospital Association Hospital Hero Award. Thank you, Tammy, for 47 years of service at Shepherd Center.

Donating Hope

Rotary Club Donates Nine Hercules Specialty Beds to Help Staff and Patients



(From top) Rotary Club members pose for a photo during a tour of the James M. Cox Innovation Institute at Shepherd Center. ▶ Alana Shepherd pictured with a Hercules bed.

On Rebecca Williamson's last day at Shepherd Center, she was looking forward to returning home to southern Missouri. She was particularly excited to see her two dogs — Charlie, a Shih Tzu, and Krypto, a Rottweiler.

Rebecca had been at Shepherd for several months and was recovering from a spinal cord injury with the help of a team of nurses, therapists, and doctors. But in addition to her care team, a piece of technology was also helping in her recovery — a Hercules bed.

Hercules beds are equipped with a system that allows nurses and therapists to adjust a patient's position in bed at the touch of a button. Kimberly Levenson, RN, says that it's normal for patients to slide down in their hospital bed throughout the day, and this can happen even more frequently for patients with high spasticity after a spinal cord injury. The conveyor belt-like technology makes transferring them back to the head of the bed easier, reducing the risk of pressure sores and aspiration, she says. The tech also helps staff and caregivers.

"It reduces the risk of staff injuries," Levenson says. "You aren't manually lifting and twisting and pulling somebody in the bed. It's a very gentle, non-traumatic way to reposition a patient."

Rebecca shares the sentiment — she says that compared to the standard bed she used at her acute care hospital, the Hercules beds allow for more gentle repositioning.

"It prevents being tossed around in the bed," she says. "That's the biggest thing."

Shepherd Center currently only has 90 Hercules beds — not enough to meet the demand, Levenson says. She frequently performs what she calls "musical beds," moving the Hercules beds to where they're needed most. But thanks to the generosity of the Buckhead Rotary Club and its sister club, the Suceava-Bucovina Rotary Club in Romania, as well as the Rotary Foundation, Shepherd Center



added nine new Hercules beds to its inventory. These beds will help patients like Rebecca and hospital staff like Kimberly, creating a safer environment where patients and caregivers can focus on recovery. *

Shepherd's Men Honors Fallen Service Members

Memorial Day March Raises Funds and Awareness

Memorial Day is a time to remember service members who made the ultimate sacrifice. This year, Shepherd's Men used the occasion to raise money for the SHARE Military Initiative at Shepherd Center, a comprehensive rehabilitation program for military veterans, service members, and first responders with brain injuries and post-traumatic stress disorder.

On May 26, 70 members of Shepherd's Men and community participants came together for a 12-mile march, starting at Reformation Brewery in Canton and making their way to the brewery's Woodstock location.

Reformation was more than a start and finish line — like Shepherd's Men, the brewery also has a commitment to raising money for SHARE. For two years, the company has brewed its Clarity Lager to raise money for the program, donating \$1 from every pint and six-pack sold. This year, Reformation's Chief Executive Officer, Spencer Nix, and Chief Operating Officer, Ryan Morley-Stockton, joined in the march. Along the participants' route, they carried a 150-pound keg of Clarity Lager and a 150-pound bag of Alma Coffee, symbolizing the emotional and mental burdens service members may face after returning from combat.

After the march, Shepherd's Men and Reformation hosted a celebration at the brewery, made complete with BBQ, community, and live music. The march raised money which will allow military veterans, service members, and first responders to receive world-class rehabilitation at no cost to them or their families. *

Photo by Lindsey Ann Snyder, 524 Creative



Deceased friends of Shepherd Center are listed first in bold print followed by the names of those making gifts in their memory. This list reflects gifts made to Shepherd Center between **April 1, 2025 through June 30, 2025.**



In August, the Atlanta Police Department's Motor Unit visited two officers who are current patients at Shepherd.

Gertrude "Trudy" Alexander
MaryJane, Don, Caitlin, Mollie Alexander
Mr. Douglas A. Benton
Jessica, Woody, Everett, and Ruthie Burgert
Mr. and Mrs. Gary Castle
Mr. and Mrs. Tom Conway
Ms. Cheryl Crawford
Jamie and Kelli Hadfield
Ms. Alice McDermott
Mr. and Mrs. Chris Moser
Ms. Maria Munger
Mr. John Pugh
Ms. Nancy Smith

Laura and Karl Anschutz
Ms. Esther L. Abisamra
Ms. Hope E. Abisamra

Claudio Azzariti
Mr. and Mrs. Gene Gettler

McCary Ballard
Dr. Julie E. Ballard

Duncan Beard
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas M. Duffy
Mrs. Margaret A. Whitaker

Mrs. Elaine Beeber
Mr. Bernard S. Goldstein

Gerald and Margaret Bernal
Mr. Richard F. Bernal

Marvin Bernstein
Mr. Bernard S. Goldstein

Leslie Blackwell
Mr. Louis DeFelice

Syble Boatright
Mrs. Mary Kay Howard

Betty Braver
Mr. Bernard S. Goldstein

Mike Bruce
Ford & Harrison LLP

Phillip Bryant
Mr. Matt Bryant

Gordon C. Bynum, Jr.
Ms. Catherine C. Fike

Dr. Susan Caller
Mr. Bernard S. Goldstein

Betty Ann Chapman
Ms. Sylvia Arant
Ms. Anne Westfall
Mr. Michael Young

Delene Clance
Mr. C. Calhoun Peterson

Rodney Wayne Clark
Ms. Jane Struk

Tyler Condon
Red Men Riders Club – Tribe #84

David Dolezal
Anonymous
Ms. Leslie G. Brown
Mr. and Mrs. Ron McNeil

Dr. Richard Estes
Dr. and Mrs. Thomas P. Briant
Mrs. Laura Smith Spearman

Ethan Farrell
Mrs. Charlene L. Farrell

Thomas Felton, LCpl USMC
Mr. Nick Felton

Dr. Robert M. Fine
Dr. and Mrs. Leonard Fishman
Mr. Bernard S. Goldstein

Gail Foster
Ms. Barbara Brenner
Mr. and Mrs. J. Rutherford Seydel

Jaycie Fowler
Mr. and Mrs. E. Parks Davis



To celebrate Weston Woods' birthday, a few of our amazing adolescent team therapists threw a party at the Arthur M. Blank Family Residences. Other adolescent patients from Weston's floor joined for games, grilling, and of course, cake!

Sam Galanti
Mr. Bernard S. Goldstein

Paul Giugliano
Anonymous
Mr. and Mrs. Oscar E. Coates
Mrs. Donna May
Shepherd Center Board of Directors

Matthew "Matt" Gonzales
Ms. Sylvie Robillard

Richard Haar
Dr. Jill M. Koval

Memory of Marjorie Holland
Mr. Bernard S. Goldstein

Jacqueline "Jackie" Hudgens
Mrs. Alana S. Shepherd

Billy Hulse
The Goddard Foundation

Melvin Jones, Jr.
Ms. Veronica Jones

Dr. Allen Korsower
Mr. Bernard S. Goldstein

Deborah Krotenberg
Arm Case Management Solutions LLC

Timothy Linkous
Anonymous

Asher "Love" Mendonsa
Mr. and Mrs. H. David Anderson

Gloria Mendosa
Anonymous
Mr. and Mrs. H. David Anderson
Mrs. Lisa Danzig
Kaye, Jim, Penny and Jill Farr
Mr. and Mrs. Sam Smartt

Geoffrey Nolan
Mr. and Mrs. Alan R. Yates

Laura Carter Overstreet
Heather and Michael Overstreet

Nolan Page's Birthday
Anonymous
Ms. Lisa Lehmann

Dr. Manning Pattillo
Mr. Bernard S. Goldstein

Morgan Payne
Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Vick

Bobby Perry, Sr.
Terry Hester

Patsy Popky
Mr. Bernard S. Goldstein

Cecile Prager
Mr. Bernard S. Goldstein

Paul Louis Roberti
Ms. Rosemary Fontana

Susan Rupert
Ms. Mary Kay Howard

James Gerard Sciantarelli
Mr. and Mrs. John R. Miller

Guy Seymour
Mr. Joseph Permaul
Ms. Penelope Wolfe

Thomas Shaver
Anonymous

Dr. Michael C. Sheff
Mr. Joel R. Feldstein

James Shepherd
Mr. and Mrs. Howell W. Newton

Lanza Shepherd
Ms. Rachel Schafer

Hubert "Bert" Shuler
Anonymous
Mr. Steven F. Bull
Ms. Claire Colvin

Forvis Mazars
Ms. Kelly Knight
Mr. and Mrs. James S. Long
Mr. and Mrs. M. S. Neblett, Jr.
Orangeburg County Farm Bureau
Shepherd Center Board of Directors
Ms. Brenda Thorpe

Rita Simononis
Ms. Julie H. Shepherd and Mr. Andrew Louw

Joanne A. Singer
Mr. Bernard S. Goldstein

Richard A. Smith, MD
Mrs. Richard A. Smith

Mark Steele
Ms. Carol J. Olsen

George Stewart
Ms. Sharon Franklin

Louisa Tarpley
Mr. Timothy Martin

Luther "Luke" Taylor
Mrs. Doris W. Taylor

Stu Tuel
Jamie Matos

Mariann Wescott
Mr. Richard N. Wescott

David M. Wheeler
Ms. Sally Wheeler

Brian Wiley
Friends in Faith First Redeemer Church

Lentz Williams
Ms. Gladys Menna
Shepherd Center Board of Directors
Ms. Suzanne L. Williams

Dennis Wilson
Ms. Sharon Gaskin

Betty Lou Wilson Jeffrey
Mrs. Alana S. Shepherd

Julia Wynne
Mr. and Mrs. Frederick E. Link
Ms. Stacy Morley

Save the Date

THE ENCHANTMENT OF

FIFTY

The Legendary Party 2025 & The Legendary Late Night

Benefitting New Acquired Brain Injury Unit

Saturday Nov. 1, 2025

To secure your tickets, visit foundation.shepherd.org/events/the-legendary-party/

LEGENDARY PARTY THE TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-FIVE

EF

Honorees are listed first in bold print followed by the names of those making gifts in their honor. This list reflects gifts made to Shepherd Center between **April 1, 2025 through June 30, 2025.**



Jaxx, one of Shepherd Center's new facility dogs, arrived in time to celebrate Alana Shepherd's 95th birthday in June.

All of those who have been taken care of at Shepherd
Mr. Bennie L. Owens

Andrew Alias
Ms. Sheryl Sellaway

Cyndae Arrendale
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas K. Glenn II

Tova Sara Beeber and Joshua Lev's Wedding
Mr. Bernard S. Goldstein

Eric Bernath
Mr. and Mrs. Philip L. Rubin

Mrs. Catherine Binns
Mr. Bernard S. Goldstein

Drew Boniface
Anonymous

James Byers
Mr. John D. Lee

Quincy Calloway's Graduation
Ralph Pumphrey and Janet Rentz

John Carlos' Birthday
Mr. and Mrs. James E. Gilmer, Jr.

Sara Chapman
Mr. and Mrs. Brad Courts

Bo Cote
Ms. Susan Cote

Claire Cross and Charles Maddrey's Wedding
Mr. Bernard S. Goldstein

Alex David Dabbiere
Mr. and Mrs. David K. Dabbiere

Courtney Dabbiere
Mr. and Mrs. David K. Dabbiere

Janet Elman
The Honorable and Mrs. Thomas Robert Rice

Jonathan Epstein's Birthday
Jack and Laura Allen

David Ewing
Mr. Timothy Ewing

Joel Feldstein
Ms. Ellen Allen

Frank Findley
Mr. and Mrs. Clifford J. Whittle

Mason Flynn
Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton Hilsman

Meredith Forrester
Dr. Kiery Braithwaite and Dr. Matthew L. Grabowski

Kelley Franklin
Mr. Grady Franklin

Kiley Gardner
Mr. and Mrs. Steve Dilley

Clara Godwin's 4th Birthday
Mr. and Mrs. Milton Godwin, Jr.

Ms. Susan Goldstein's Birthday
Mr. Bernard S. Goldstein

Scott Gordon, Sr.
Mr. and Mrs. Scott Gordon

Jack, Charlie and Louise Guthrie
Mr. and Mrs. Jerry D. Guthrie

Julie Haas
Mr. John D. Lee

Connie Hart
Mr. and Mrs. Luther Kelley

Josh Henderson
Ms. Chelsea Suddith

Wayne Hodge's Birthday
Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Larue

Katrina Hodges
Chris Carmichael

Nicolas Horne
Mr. Dameon Horne

Katie Huffner
James and Marion Cohen
Ms. Katherine Coppedge
Mr. and Mrs. Matthew J. Cowan
Mr. and Mrs. James C. Davis
Mr. John Gallagher
Mr. and Mrs. Michael E. Granish
Mr. and Mrs. David A. Ivie
Ms. Krista L. Owens
Mr. and Mrs. Billy Payne
Mr. and Mrs. Edward Solar

Michael J. Hull's Birthday
Ms. Marjorie Hull

Mr. Jim Jackson
Mr. Bernard S. Goldstein

Raoul M. "Duecy" Jenkins II's Graduation
Beth, Mary Pat & Mary Baldauf Baldauf

Irene Jones' Birthday
Mr. Bernard S. Goldstein

Emily Kendrick's Birthday
Arrow Exterminators, Inc.

Elana Kennedy's Birthday
Rabbi and Mrs. Stan Beiner

Linden Longino
Mr. Bernard S. Goldstein

Ms. Betty Maddox's Recovery
Mr. Bernard S. Goldstein

Gus McGowan
Anonymous

William "Will" Meadows
Mr. and Mrs. Richard H. Meadows

Ms. Kay Millikan
Mr. Bernard S. Goldstein

Justice Munn
Mr. and Mrs. Harold Munn

Ryan Narramore
Anonymous

Don Nelson
Kendall Nelson

David Norflus' Birthday
Mr. Bernard S. Goldstein

Edwin O'Connor
Ms. Dawn Hodges

George "Ed" O'Connor's Birthday
Mr. and Mrs. Tommy Cohen
Ms. Becky White

Josh Ozley
Mrs. Kim Ozley

Ms. Martha Pattillo
Mr. Bernard S. Goldstein

Melissa Pierce
Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan G. Roxland

Marilyn Prevor's Birthday
Mr. Bernard S. Goldstein

Kay Rogers
Mr. Bernard S. Goldstein

The Rollins Family
Mr. and Mrs. Mark C. West

Alana Shepherd – 95th Birthday
Kerri Anderson
Dr. Angela Beninga
Dr. Gerald S. Bilsky
Dr. and Mrs. Brock K. Bowman
Ms. Jennifer P. Cantrell
Mr. and Mrs. John A. Carlos
Dr. and Mrs. Andrew Dennison
Dr. Anna C. Elmers and Mr. Mike Elmers
Dr. Payal Fadia and Mr. Rohit Chopra
Ms. Adrienne Garofalo
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas K. Glenn II
Dr. and Mrs. Russell Gore
Ms. Jackie Haar
Ms. Peggy Hatcher
Mr. Maurice B. Jackson



Ms. Terri E. Kohn
Dr. Jill M. Koval
Mrs. Aubrey Lunsford
Mr. and Mrs. J. Hays Mershon
James Starr Moore Memorial Foundation, Inc.
James Morgan, MD
Dr. and Mrs. H. Herndon Murray
Mr. and Mrs. Louie A. Pittman, Jr.
Dr. David Quintero and Dr. Stacie Schmidt
Mr. and Mrs. Charles S. Rigby
Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan G. Roxland
Mrs. Deen Day Sanders
Dr. Karen S. Thrower and Dr. Ben W. Thrower
Drs. Ford and Lisa Vox
Judge and Mrs. Charles S. Wynne
Dr. Michael Yochelson and Mr. Kevin Clift

Shepherd Center Physicians Thank you for all you do!!
Dr. Michael Yochelson and Mr. Kevin Clift

Julie Shepherd and Ashley Kim's Canine Companion support dogs
Scott, Kelly & AK Spangler

Layla Kennedy, who sustained a spinal cord injury and completed inpatient rehab in the SCI program, has big dreams about a career in sports management. Thanks to help from Cheryl Linden and the Atlanta Falcons, Layla got to watch practice from the field and even had a surprise visit from Bijan Robinson, who gifted her a personalized jersey.

coming Soon!!

Pecans on Peachtree



Ordering Begins Nov. 1

Featuring New Supplier
Ellis Bros. Pecans

To order yours, visit
pecansonpeachtree.org.

Julie Shepherd
Three Sibs Foundation, Inc.

Dr. and Mrs. Leonard Silverman's 70th Wedding Anniversary
Mr. Bernard S. Goldstein

Sydney Simon's Birthday
Mr. Bernard S. Goldstein

AK Spangler
Anonymous
Ms. Kelly Frankenreider
Ms. Liz Hobbs
Ms. Marly Landis
Sharal Lockett
Ms. Esther Rogers

Hamp Stevens
Mr. John Eastman

Paige Stumph
Ms. Sarah Carranzana

Dan Edward Taratoot
Mr. James A. Curtis

Betsy Teplis
Mr. Bernard S. Goldstein

Mr. and Mrs. David Watkins
Mr. James A. Curtis

Henry Wetzler
Mr. and Mrs. Roy S. Thompson

Chip and Krissy Williams Happy Anniversary
Anonymous

Save the Date

Upcoming Shepherd Events

Shepherd's Men Clay Shoot
Friday,
Oct. 24, 2025
The Burge Club

Soque Slam Invitational Fishing Rodeo
Saturday,
Oct. 25, 2025
Clarksville, Georgia

Legendary Party
Saturday,
Nov. 1, 2025
Flourish Atlanta

Best Dressed

Patients show off their favorite Shepherd t-shirts



Alex Manning

Every year, Alex observes the anniversary of his brain injury with some kind of adventure, sometimes sporting the "I Survived Shepherd Center Bootcamp" T-shirt he earned upon graduation from Shepherd. This year, his friends traveled to Washington, D.C., from Alabama, North Carolina, and Oregon to mark the 10th anniversary of sustaining his injury, cycling and camping along the C&O Canal. His original Shepherd graduation T-shirt was a little worse for wear, so he requested a new one to wear during the trip, a request that Shepherd staff were happy to fulfill.

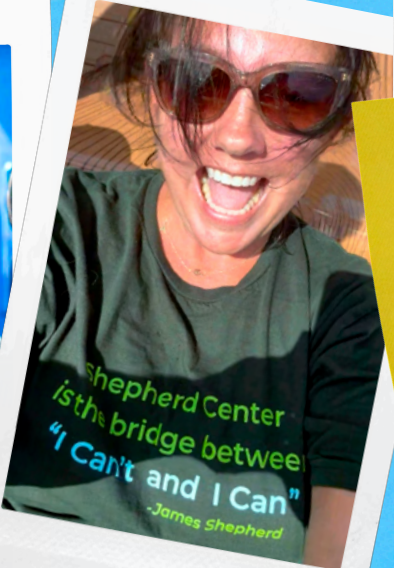
Will Reed

Last July 4, weeks after sustaining a spinal cord injury in a fall, Will Reed watched and cheered from his power chair as runners, walkers, and wheelers raced past Shepherd Center as part of the AJC Peachtree Road Race. He made himself a promise — next year, he'd complete the race. After months of rehabilitation, Will and his wife, Katie, crossed the finish line, with Will in his Shepherd Center graduation shirt. He made a quick stop on his way by Shepherd Center to receive cheers and hugs from members of his Shepherd care team. Congrats, Will and Katie!



Katie Carr

When Katie was visiting an amusement park in Delaware this summer, she wanted to show her nieces and nephews that being an amputee wouldn't stop her from enjoying the day — getting on different rides, enjoying time with family, and having fun. Fittingly, she was wearing her Shepherd Center "I Can" t-shirt!



Shepherd Center Foundation | Board of Trustees

Officers

Kelly Regal – Chair, President & COO, ONYX

Beth Boatwright, CPA* – Treasurer, Chief Financial Officer, Shepherd Center

Jamie Shepherd* – President and CEO, Shepherd Center

Sarah Batts* – Senior VP of Advancement, Shepherd Center Foundation

Alana Shepherd – Secretary, Co-Founder of Shepherd Center

Michael Yochelson, M.D.* – Chief Medical Officer, Shepherd Center

Members

Stephanie Anderson, Associate Judge, Rockdale County Probate Court

David F. Apple, Jr., M.D., Medical Director Emeritus, Shepherd Center

Eric Bernath, Chief Operating Officer, Advance Drum Service, Inc.

Angela Blank, Community Volunteer & Veteran Advocate

Sarah Borders, Retired, Former Bankruptcy & Real Estate Partner, King & Spalding

Eric Busko, Managing Director & Regional Executive, Alex. Brown

Michael Carter – Head of Corporate & Investment Banking, Truist

William Choate, Principal, Packard Capital, LLC & Chairman, Choate Construction Company

Brad Courts, Vice President, Atlanta Investment Company

David Dabbieri, Private Investor

Keith Dockery, M.D., Founder, Buckhead Ear, Nose and Throat

Greg Dunavant, Vice President, Customer Operations, Gas South

Kari Carlos Dunn, Vice President, Republic National Distributing

Meredith Forrester, EVP & Chief Audit Executive, Synovus

Fred Henritze, Co-Founder, President & COO, The Brookdale Group

Debbie Howard, Managing Director, Merrill Lynch Wealth Management

Keith Johnson, East Group President, Brasfield & Gorrie

Larry Kelly, Executive Chairman, Pope & Land Enterprises, Inc.

Emily Kendrick, CEO, Arrow

Amy Rollins Kreisler, Executive Director, The Wayne O. Rollins Foundation

Tony Marzullo, President & Owner, Gas Motorcars

Spencer Moore, Commissioner, Georgia Department of Driver Services

Elizabeth White Morris, Civic Volunteer

Shane O'Kelly, CEO, Advance Auto Parts

Kristin Replogle, President, Replogle Family Foundation

Darren Ross, Vice Chair, Principal, Colliers International

Eric Schelling, Vice President of Global Talent Acquisition, The Home Depot

Blair Schmidt-Fellner, President, Route 30-A

Kellie Schöenberg, Retired, Former Executive, Invesco

Sheryl Sellaway, Chief Strategist, Righteous PR Agency

William Stengel II, President & COO, Genuine Parts Company

Ron Stewart, Retired Executive, Board Member and Advisor

Jim Thompson, IV, Advisory Seat, Managing Director, Truist Securities

Mark West, President, First Beacon Investments, Inc.

Richard 'Buck' Woodruff, Owner, Carland Group
*Ex Officio

Emeriti Members

Elizabeth Allen, Civic Volunteer

John A. Carlos, President & COO, National Distributing Company, Inc.

Billi Marcus, Civic Volunteer
The Marcus Foundation, Inc.



Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Atlanta, GA
Permit No. 1703

2020 Peachtree Road NW
Atlanta, GA 30309-1465
404-352-2020 shepherd.org



"To me, teamwork is working to build a good environment ... you're all trying to uplift each other," says adolescent patient Jackson Drum. You can meet Jackson and the members of his care team starting on page 8.