



# Sweet Charity

Spring 2018 Volume 111, Issue 1

A Good Shepherd Publication

**Living  
the Dream**



# Voices Worth Hearing

Dear Friends,

The world we live in is a noisy one. Every day we are bombarded by a multitude of voices vying for our attention and often our money. So, where do we turn to find the voices worth listening to, the ones reassuring us that our philanthropic gifts are truly well spent?

The answer is in your hands. For 110 years, *Sweet Charity* has been bringing its readers and donors a calming and inspiring message of hope and purpose through the voices of grateful patients and their families, residents, staff, and volunteers.

One of those voices is Brittney Clouse. Since she was three years old, Brittney has been coming to Good Shepherd for help managing her cerebral palsy and maintaining her independence. Now a 22-year-old journalism major at Penn State, Brittney jumped at the opportunity to tell her first-person story in *Sweet Charity*.

Shane Burcaw also has a distinctive voice. Shane is a Lehigh Valley resident and author with a lot to say about living with a disability. Shane and his cousin Sarah Yunusov co-founded Laughing At My Nightmare, Inc., and spoke at the Conrad W. Raker Lecture at Muhlenberg College in February. Their unique perspective had us all joining them in laughter.

I am also pleased to report that in December many of you heard us asking for support of two year-end matching gift challenges put forth by some of our donors. Your generosity helped us raise \$138,395 for the Ekso Wellness Fund and \$120,964 to purchase a new wheelchair-accessible van for our long-term care residents to use on community outings. Additional funds will be used for more outings. Thank you to all who gave!

As you go about your busy lives take time to pause, listen and reflect on the voices featured in every issue of *Sweet Charity*. Consider then how your gifts can best amplify those voices. If the message is worth sharing, and it is, then it is worth being heard.

Thank you.



John Kristel, MBA, MPT, FACHE  
President & CEO



Cerebral palsy has posed plenty of challenges to Brittney Clouse's dream of walking and being independent, but nothing can hold her back. Brittney shares a first-person account of her lifelong determination.

## Living the Dream

Cover photograph: Randy Monceaux



### The Boot Scootin' Boogie Ball

Residents of the Good Shepherd Home-Bethlehem donned their denims and cowboy hats for the annual ball.



### Their Ticket to Ride

Thanks to donor generosity, a year-end matching gift challenge was met to buy a new van for our residents.



### Flight Plan to Recovery

A retired pilot for Alaska Airlines goes the distance to find help at Good Shepherd recovering from a stroke.



## 21

### Funny Man

Shane Burcaw has plenty to say about living with a disability and did it with humor at the Conrad W. Raker Lecture.

### Reflections 16

By Chaplain Kelly Brooks

### Gifts of Love 18

### Holiday Happenings 22

### In Memoriam 24

— Scott Sarley, Aaron Oleksa, John Gorman

### *Our Mission*

Motivated by the divine Good Shepherd and the physical and cognitive rehabilitation needs of our communities, our mission is to enhance lives, maximize function, inspire hope, and promote dignity and well-being with expertise and compassion.



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# Living the

— by Brittney Clouse

# DRIFTERS



**I**ndependence. It's something that most people take for granted. Independence is a beautiful thing, especially for someone like me living with cerebral palsy. I've fought to be independent my whole life. In fact, I was born fighting just to survive. It's been a long road but I haven't been traveling it alone. Good Shepherd has been with me since the beginning and still is today, helping me maintain my independence and giving me the encouragement to dream and strive for those dreams.

My mother had complications during her pregnancy and I was delivered by emergency C-section. At just 26 weeks and weighing 1 pound, 13 ounces, I wasn't expected to survive. I fit in the palm of my father's hand and am told by my family that I was about the size of a ketchup bottle with arms.

I stayed in the hospital for 72 days struggling with a collapsed lung and trying to gain enough weight so I could come home. Like all parents blessed with a child with special needs, my parents were warned about all of the "maybes." I *may* be blind. I *may* never walk or talk. I *may* never be able to recognize my parents. I *may* need full-time care for the rest of my life.

My parents never discussed with me the thoughts or feelings they had during this difficult time and I cannot imagine the decisions they faced. But I was one of the lucky ones. My mother says that on the date I was supposed to be born, I woke up and began laughing while my father was changing my diaper. Since that day my parents knew they would



*Shopping at the Lehigh Valley Mall with her boyfriend Cody Andrews and cooking are two of Brittany's favorite things to do.*

be making different decisions than the ones advised. From now on their choices would be life-affirming for me.

Independence seems to be key for my personal survival. As a child I dreamed of walking independently. I accomplished my goal from the age of 10 until about 16 when I started experiencing chronic hip and back pain. I returned to using a walker, but by the time I graduated high school the pain was so severe that I could hardly walk. I wanted to go to college and knew that using my walker alone wouldn't be enough. I decided that a power chair would give me more of the independence I wanted so badly and worked so hard to achieve.

I have been coming to Good Shepherd my whole life, since I was three years old. Good Shepherd is like a second home to me and many of the therapists, nurses, and doctors

are like family. They've always had my back, working as a team, helping me press on trying to find solutions to my pain and struggles.

I have been a fighter my entire life. I used to hate physical therapy. But the truth is, I didn't like not being able to walk, and I realized that physical therapy has always helped me get mobile and stay mobile. A light bulb went off and I began to actively play a role in my treatment plans. Now I had full control of my life.

I was 21 years old when I graduated from Good Shepherd's Pediatrics Program and began exploring my treatment options as an adult. This led me to Dr. Asare Christian who specializes in physical medicine and rehabilitation.

Dr. Christian is like a light and a breath of fresh air for me.

I have never given up on my wish to walk and continue walking, and Dr. Christian believes in me and supports my dream. He is as committed to finding an answer for me as he is to his medicine. He is exactly what I need. He's open-minded and patient. He has spent hours talking with me, explaining things, following up with me. He cares deeply and is as invested in me and my care as I am. That's how he is with all his patients.

When I came to Dr. Christian, I was struggling with a lot of pain and spasticity in my hips and legs. It robbed me of my mobility and forced me to stop using my walker and rely on my power chair. Together, Dr. Christian and I decided to try a procedure I had quite a few times before with varying side effects and results: Botox® injections. I was excited but I also had my doubts. I knew Botox worked for me but it didn't produce the long-term results I hoped for.



Most people probably think of Botox for cosmetic purposes.

But long before Botox became the cosmetic darling of the Hollywood crowd it's been used in the medical world to treat such things as excessive sweating, migraines, bladder problems, movement disorders, and more. In

my case, Botox helps to relax my muscles making it easier for Good Shepherd's physical therapists to stretch me out.

Before getting my first injection in March of 2017 the pain and spasticity was so bad I couldn't walk. At one point I was confined to my house for three months. I was devastated and worried a lot about my future. I would be getting Botox injections every three months if needed to keep mobile. But what if the Botox didn't work or stopped working? Dr. Christian talked about the potential side effects such as bruising and discomfort at the injection site, but for me the benefits far outweighed the risks. And it's not every doctor who will play the music of your choice like Dr. Christian does during the 30 minutes it takes for a treatment!

All my worries vanished and this time was a different story. After my first injection the burning in my legs started to diminish as I left the office. The next day I was up and walking, returning to my routine. It was so exciting. It's



a lot like being reborn. I had gone through this dramatic loss of so many abilities and in one office visit I was getting them back. Now I have the chance to grow stronger every day and really work on what my body needs. It's wonderful.

Botox combined with physical therapy has been life changing. Dr.

Christian has literally put me back on my feet. Relieved of the pain and stiffness I now am able to enjoy doing things I used to do; shopping, cooking, helping with chores at home, going to concerts, going out with my friends, living the life of a normal 22 year old.

My wish to walk and continue walking came true. Thank you Dr. Christian. Thank you Good Shepherd. As I said, independence is a beautiful thing.

Brittney Clouse is a senior at Pennsylvania State University studying digital/print journalism with a minor in entrepreneurship and innovation focusing on new media. She will graduate in May. Brittney's column, "Living Life with CP" appears online at [cerebralpalseynews.com](http://cerebralpalseynews.com)

*(Opposite Page) Brittney with Dr. Asare Christian, MD, MPH.  
(Above) Brittney with her pet bird Bowie.*



Cowboy hats, plaid shirts, denims, boots, and bandanas were all in style at the Boot Scootin' Boogie Ball for residents of the Good Shepherd Home-Bethlehem and their guests on Friday, November 10, 2017, at the Best Western Lehigh Valley Hotel & Conference Center. Toes were tapping and wheelchairs spinning on the dance floor as deejay Tim Weidner kept the country-western tunes coming all night long.

Many contributed their time and talent to help the recreational therapy team make the ball a foot stomping success including event coordinator Gina Martin of the Best Western, Rockin' Remaleys for the mood-setting

# The Boot Scootin'



uplighting in the ballroom, draping by Cheryl Reph at CK Designs & Special Events, Metro Beauty Academy students who made the residents' hair and makeup look fabulous, and a small army of Good Shepherd associates who helped with transportation, getting residents ready and attended the ball. This year, as a way of giving back to the community, more than 100 pounds of non-perishable goods and supplies from resident families, staff, volunteers and Best Western staff were collected for the Northampton Food Bank.

## THE ROYAL COURT

### **KING**

John Graver

### **LORDS**

Evan Tobias  
John Barkasi  
Greg Miller

**QUEEN** *pictured*  
Judy Wetcher

### **LADIES**

Lauren Nicholson  
Marianne Paulucci  
Marcy Clauser



# Boogie Ball





# THEIR TICKET

*Thanks to the generosity of donors and seed money from a philanthropic volunteer, Good Shepherd's long-term care residents will be getting a new van for community outings.*

Elvira "Elfie" Maniatty loved many people during her lifetime, among them her husband George, her four children and the residents of the Good Shepherd Home Raker Center where she was a volunteer since 1995. Elfie also knew what she didn't like. High on her list of frustrations was watching residents wait a long time for public transportation to pick them up when they wanted to go somewhere in the community.

Seeing an opportunity to enhance the independence and quality of life for Good Shepherd's residents, several resident families put forth a matching gift challenge to raise money for a new van able to accommodate four residents in wheelchairs. The new van will replace an old van that will be retired.

Elfie, who lived in Allentown, passed away in March 2017 at age 77. But Elfie's family remembers her as a woman

*Good Shepherd's wheelchair-accessible vans make it possible for residents to enjoy community outings like boating on the Lehigh River, and trips to the Jersey shore and Cabela's.*

# TO RIDE

who “led a prayerful life and had the faith of a mustard seed.” So it seemed only appropriate that with her family’s blessing, a \$10,000 bequest to Good Shepherd from Elfie’s estate became the first gift towards the purchase of the van.

But the Maniattys’ generosity didn’t stop with that first gift. George was so moved to further honor his wife’s legacy of compassion that he made an additional \$10,000 gift towards the van fund. “She had backbone and she was very generous,” says George. “I would say she was always eager to support the things she believed in.”

Like the parable of the mustard seed that yielded a mighty tree providing shelter to birds, Elfie’s gift was the seed money for a successful fund raising campaign generating more than \$106,000 from 576 donors. The outpouring of generosity not only covers the cost of the van but also provides additional funds for more resident outings such as holidays and special events with families, concerts at the PPL Center, plays at the Shakespeare Festival, and trips to Hershey Chocolate World and the Philadelphia Zoo.

“Elfie didn’t live to see the new van but she would have been thrilled,” says JoAnn Frey, volunteer coordinator. “She had everybody’s best interests at heart.”

Echoing that sentiment, Elfie’s daughter Antoinette says, “I think she would have liked it very much. One of the things she used to do was take residents out shopping. Sometimes they had to use public transportation, which could be challenging. She also had difficulty walking in the last few years and standing

waiting for the bus was very hard.”

Elfie so enjoyed getting out and about with the

residents she shared the experience with her two grandchildren. In the fall of 2015, Elfie took them on a resident shopping trip to the mall, which was both rewarding and a special memory for them.

Elfie was among Good Shepherd’s most devoted volunteers giving thousands of hours over the years; 241 hours in 2012 alone. As a resident personal assistant Elfie would visit residents weekly writing letters for them, tidying up rooms, switching seasonal clothing in and out of closets, and just being the best friend and companion she could.

“I think she had a real closeness with the residents she visited on a regular basis,” says George.

Ingrid Baruch Lande, director of rehabilitation services for long-term care, is deeply grateful to every donor who made it possible to buy the van which will serve residents in both the Allentown and Bethlehem homes. “It is because of the kindness of our friends in the community that we are able to provide our residents with the opportunity to live a meaningful life by being able to travel with safety and dignity to places and events that bring them joy,” says Ingrid. “On behalf of all of us in long-term care at Good Shepherd, I cannot say thank you enough. Please know how very grateful we all are.”



*Elvira and George Maniatty*

Mike Cessnun was in trouble. It was 5 a.m. on January 26, 2012, and he was alone in his Seattle, Washington apartment when he had a stroke. "I couldn't move my left arm or leg," says Mike. "My father had a stroke so I kind of recognized the symptoms. I guess I assumed that's what it was."

A 31-year pilot for Alaska Airlines, home base for Mike was in Ketchikan, Alaska with his

wife Marna, but the apartment was a home away from home as his flights originated in Seattle. Now though, the veteran pilot was flying solo and more than ever needed his co-pilot of 38 years, but Marna was miles away.

With immense difficulty, Mike crawled downstairs to his cell phone. Overcome by confusion, weakness and nausea, Mike lay helplessly on the floor for 14 hours before he

# Flight Plan to Recovery



was able to call for help. By the time paramedics broke down the chained door to his apartment and rushed Mike to the hospital, his brain was so swollen from the stroke that he needed emergency surgery to remove a portion of his skull to relieve the pressure.

Mike attributes that surgery to the first of several miracles that brought him through the most difficult time of his life. Another miracle came five years later when Mike traveled 2,207 miles to Good Shepherd's Neurorehabilitation Program in Allentown where his daughter Megan works as a board-certified neurological clinical specialist.

"The northwest has limited neurorehabilitation facilities and Megan had been begging us for a couple of years to go to Good Shepherd," says Marna. "But she said he needed to commit to three months. We were just at the right point in Mike's healing to make that journey."

Mike had partial visual field loss in both eyes and struggled with weakness on his left side affecting his gait, posture, balance, and use of his hand. His cardiovascular endurance had also diminished hampering his ability to take long walks around one of his favorite lakes. Mike had several months of therapy in Seattle but eventually reached a plateau. Megan

*Allison Cole, an occupational therapist specializing in vision, was part of a team of speech and physical therapists in the Neurorehabilitation Program who helped Mike Cessnu improve since a stroke five years ago.*

had high hopes Good Shepherd could improve her father's quality of life because she had witnessed inspiring outcomes with neurologically-impaired patients every day.



In September 2017, Mike finally made it to Good Shepherd where he began an intense three-and-a-half month program of speech, physical, occupational, and vision therapy to tackle his deficits.

Allison Cole, an occupational therapist specializing in vision therapy, was part of

Mike's team bringing its expertise and advanced technology to help him achieve the best possible outcome. "When Mike came he had really poor awareness of the left side of his environment," says Allison. "He wasn't really getting out in the community. He was stuck in the house because he was worried about obstacles or unseen things in his environment that he might bump in to like people or walls."

By the time Mike returned home in December 2017, his field of vision, depth perception, balance, cognitive skills, and ability to negotiate busy environments improved. Mike's cardiovascular endurance was stronger and he had better flexibility in his left ankle improving his gait and enabling him to walk up to two miles.

"I'd been to three facilities and what I've seen at Good Shepherd has been amazing," says Mike who is more confident doing daily activi-

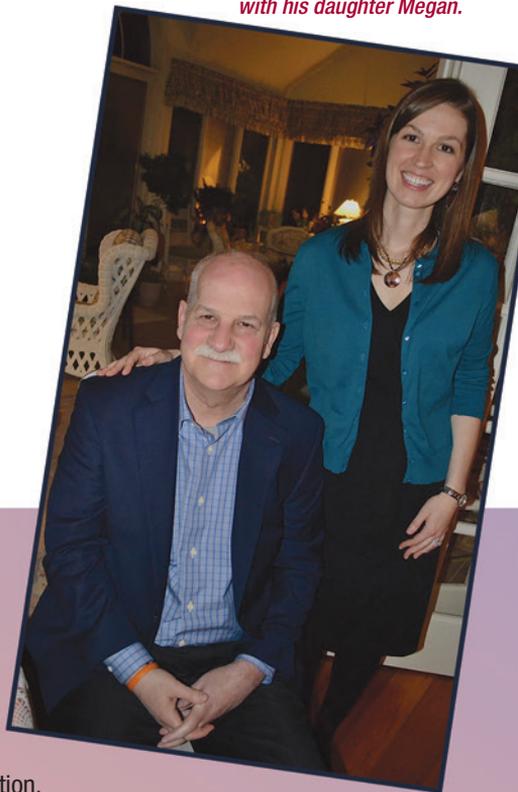
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ties. “Every therapist I had was excellent. My recovery seems to have been accelerated and my quality of life has improved. I tell people it’s an amazing facility.”

Dividing her time between Alaska and Allentown while managing her own career as a real estate agent wasn’t the easiest for Marna, but seeing her husband’s improvement and uplifted spirit makes it all worthwhile. “On all levels it was such a great experience,” says Marna. “It was kind of like a little miracle in our lives because it gave us a new direction. Now Mike has the potential to go further, and he did go further. It was such a blessing.”

Watch the video of Mike’s personal testimony at [goodshepherdrehab.org/Mike](http://goodshepherdrehab.org/Mike)

*Mike Cessnun  
with his daughter Megan.*



## **The Good Shepherd Endowment for Therapist Scholarships**

*“There’s nothing more rewarding for a therapist than to change their patients’ lives. The best way to do that is to have as many tools in their toolbox as they can get. And the way we do that is through higher education and constant learning.” – Sue Golden, regional director, outpatient rehabilitation.*

The Good Shepherd Endowment for Therapist Scholarships was recently established through the generosity of committed donors to provide continuing education funds for therapists at Good Shepherd. Annual scholarships will help pay tuition for board certifications, residencies, specialized training, conference attendance, symposium offerings, and more for therapists. “We want to be the leader in best practice,” says Sue Golden. “We are paving the way for the future.”

After completing a six-month internship in outpatient rehabilitation in 2014, Megan Cessnun, a board-certified neurological clinical specialist, chose Good Shepherd as the place to start her career. The organization’s commitment to investing in new technology and support for continuing education are among the many reasons Megan finds working at Good Shepherd so inspiring.

“Therapists are motivated by patient outcomes and achieving those outcomes quickly,” says Megan. “We crave education because this is what makes our patients successful. This endowment shows that Good Shepherd values education and therapist development. It also says that Good Shepherd encourages using current research to give our patients the best possible care.”

Good Shepherd has set a goal of raising \$500,000 for the endowment over the next three to five years. For information on how you can help make a difference in the lives of people like Mike Cessnun through your giving contact Carol Carpenter at [ccarpenter@gsrh.org](mailto:ccarpenter@gsrh.org) or 610-778-1044.

# Best Charitable Gifts to Make in 2018

There are many ways to support Good Shepherd and enjoy financial benefits for yourself. Making a tax-smart gift allows you to leverage more of your contribution in support of programs that you care about. It's a win-win that benefits our patients, residents and YOU!

## ***Here are some smart ways to give in 2018:***

**Give from your IRA** (if age 70½ or older). A charitable distribution from your traditional individual retirement account helps fulfill your required minimum distribution and you'll pay no tax on the amount transferred to Good Shepherd.

**Donate appreciated stock.** Give appreciated stocks to Good Shepherd and eliminate capital gains tax.

**Establish a gift annuity.** Funding a gift annuity with cash or stock may help you meet the threshold for itemizing your deductions. In return you'll enjoy a fixed rate and payments for life.

**Name Good Shepherd as a beneficiary of your retirement plan.** These assets remain taxable when distributed to a loved one but are tax-free when given to a charitable organization.

## **Ask Us How**

For more information, contact Jeannette Edwards at **610-778-1075** or **[jedwards@gsrh.org](mailto:jedwards@gsrh.org)**.

Visit **[SweetCharityOnline.org/plannedgiving](http://SweetCharityOnline.org/plannedgiving)** for more tax-smart giving ideas.

Good Shepherd encourages you to consult your tax and financial advisors to determine the best charitable giving strategies for you.



*When Jesus went ashore, He saw a large crowd and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things.*

(Mark 6:34)

# Reflections

— by Chaplain Kelly Brooks

We all probably remember a teacher who at some point in our lives made a significant impact. It was either through educational support or just a listening ear at a difficult time. I was fortunate to have several wonderful teachers. It was my first grade teacher who inspired and encouraged me as I was learning to read. Of course, that was followed by a great high school English teacher who helped me to polish my writing skills. I am grateful for the ability as an adult to adventure to worlds unknown and to read theologically inspiring books. My research advisor during my undergraduate studies gave me great self-care guidance. Furthermore, my family is full of teachers who care deeply about their students and go the extra mile to help them succeed.

Teachers come in many forms. Good Shepherd has an overwhelming supply of teachers. From the beginning, the Rev. John (Papa) and Estelle (Mama) Raker, who founded Good Shepherd, were pioneer educators in the realm of disabilities. Strong in faith and the understanding of discipleship, they followed lessons taught by Jesus. Led by Bible stories through parables and examples of grace, the Rakers became a reflection of God's ever abiding love and generosity. Not only did they accept every child as a productive member of society but they educated the community about



*“Whether it’s  
acquiring skills  
or learning to adjust  
to a new lifestyle  
or gaining wisdom,  
education is a  
universal language.”*

compassionate care for all of God's children. One way they did that was through *Sweet Charity* magazine created by Papa Raker.

Filled with articles of hope and healing, generous giving spirits and community partnerships, *Sweet Charity* has been a source of teaching and information to the public since 1908. In fact, Papa Raker used to carry copies of the magazine around in his pocket, handing them out to whomever he encountered as a way of continuing the Rakers' ministry of service to those in need. Papa Raker and his son Conrad frequently preached in area congregations about the work being done by Good Shepherd to provide compassionate care and expertise to those with disabilities.

The mission of encouraging and helping every patient and resident achieve the greatest independence possible continues still today. From nurses to physicians to expert therapists, the whole Good Shepherd team embodies the concept of teaching. They spend many hours educating patients and residents about everything from self-care and emotional well-being to physical rehabilitation strategies and technologies.

But the learning pipeline flows two ways. We as a Good Shepherd family learn from the residents and patients that come through our doors. We learn joy and resilience from the children that overcome various odds. The patients inform us about strength and

perseverance. The residents teach us how to cope with chronic illness and live with disabilities. They are all witness to the spirit that created Good Shepherd.

Whether it's acquiring skills or learning to adjust to a new lifestyle or gaining wisdom, education is a universal language. We are all essentially teachers. We all have wisdom and experiences that are precious gifts we can pass along to our children, friends and family. We all have life histories and cultural perspectives that can educate others in the community around us to build a more inclusive environment. The Good Shepherd mission and vision continues to teach the concept of learning and growing to live with one other in a respectful and righteous manner. Truly these are lessons Jesus, the greatest teacher of them all, has taught us.

# Gifts of Love

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*We thank the generous families and friends who honor their dear ones with memorial gifts and living gifts of honor. These gifts help support Good Shepherd's mission of service to people with disabilities, many who otherwise could not afford the therapies or long-term care they need.*

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# Funny Man

The bad news is Shane Burcaw has spinal muscular atrophy. The good news is the disease has caused him “to be incredibly handsome and intelligent,” and he’s not going to die from it. In fact, Shane is going to live 3,000 years. Well, maybe not *that* long. But thanks to a new drug that stops the progression of the disease and a sense of humor better than any doctor’s prescription, Shane seems destined to be around for many years to come keeping his thousands of social media fans laughing right along with him.

The 25-year-old award-winning author, blogger and columnist in *The Morning Call*, shared his off-beat perspective on life along with his business partner and cousin Sarah Yunusov at the Conrad W. Raker Lecture at Muhlenberg College on Wednesday, February 21. Shane and Sarah are the co-founders of Laughing At My Nightmare, Inc. The non-profit Bethlehem-based organization has raised more than \$81,000 in equipment grants to people living with muscular dystrophy.

While there are many things Shane can’t do without help, laughing at himself isn’t one of them. Believing that the best way to deal with the lemons life deals you is with relentless humor and a positive outlook, Shane and Sarah have toured around the country spreading laughter and educating people of all ages about living with a disability, dispelling many “warped perspectives” along the way. “Throughout my life, I’ve developed a thick skin,” says Shane. “In time I realized laughter was a really good way to deal with this (disease). I realized that maybe I could do something with my skills and disabilities to face this challenge head on.”

Not one to shy away from taking risks, perhaps the biggest risk Shane took was to start injections of Spinraza™. With his characteristic wry sense of humor, Shane described the potential side effects. Death was a biggie. But four injections later, Shane’s prospects of living a long life are looking better than ever. “As far as I can tell the disease has been stopped in its tracks,” Shane said to joyful applause from the audience. “I took a risk and it paid off. And now I’m going to live to be 3,000 years old.”

If anyone can pull that off, it’s Shane Burcaw.



Visit Shane and Sarah on the web at [laughingatmynightmare.com](http://laughingatmynightmare.com) and on Facebook.

Photo: Laughing At My Nightmare, Inc.



*(Above, L-R): Hands Into Bethlehem, Erinn Vassallo, therapeutic recreation specialist; Leslie Billowitch, registered dietitian; Nicole Stevens, speech-language pathologist. (Below and far right): Hands Down St. John Street staff and volunteers; Natalie Kistler, accounting manager.*



**t**he holidays seem like a distant memory now but what lingers for the Good Shepherd family is the joy from participating in Hands Down St. John Street and Gifts Into Bethlehem. In keeping with long-standing tradition staff, volunteers and family members pass wrapped gifts hand to hand and placed them in Santa sacks for our 159 residents to open on Christmas. This beloved ritual dates back to the Rev. Dr. Conrad Raker, former administrator and son of our founders, John (Papa) and Estelle (Mama) Raker.

Donations to the resident Holiday Wish List make possible the purchase of hundreds of gifts. Thank you to all our donors who contributed this year and every year.

We also thank **Caitlyn Keeney** and the **Animal Therapy Center** for their toy drives, and **Allied Resources Medical Staffing** for raising and donating \$840 benefiting children at the Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Hospital Emily Howatt Pliskatt Pediatric Unit. **Good Shepherd associates** also were in a giving frame of mind and donated gift cards to 37 families of children in the Pediatrics Program.



# HOLIDAY Happenings



## Scott Sarley

Scott Sarley was encouraging to all, enjoyed a good laugh and didn't let his cerebral palsy change his giving nature and strong sense of self-worth. A resident of the Good Shepherd Home-Bethlehem, Scott was first and foremost a son, brother and friend who brought joy to many until his passing on November 20, 2017, at age 38 after a brief illness.

Scott was born in Wilkes-Barre on January 8, 1979, the third child of Jo-Ann and the late William Sarley. "He was always a joy, cheerful and outgoing," says Jo-Ann, "and he loved people. He was very motivating, even when he was extremely young. He didn't think of himself as different."

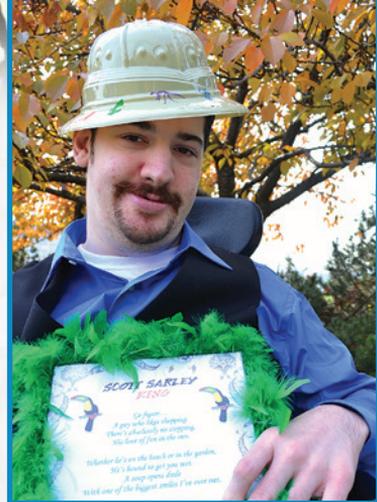
Scott lived at home for 32 years but his parents knew they needed to plan for his future in the event they were no longer able to care for him. Jo-Ann learned about Good Shepherd while at her hairdresser's and overheard a conversation about a woman who spoke highly of Good Shepherd where her child was a resident. "I just felt in my heart this was where Scott was supposed to go if the need arose," says Jo-Ann, whose husband passed away in December 2009.

Scott and his parents arranged for a tour of Good Shepherd. Afterwards, Scott said to the staff, "It really sounds like you can help me here." He were right.

In December 2010, Scott moved to Good Shepherd. With the help of his caregivers, Scott quickly adapted to his new home and began a mutual love affair with the staff. "He genuinely loved all the staff, nurses, therapists, aides, maintenance, security, everybody," says Jo-Ann. "They saw him through the adjustment of living at home all his life and they helped him mature and grow. I really do believe they helped him become an even better person."

Scott enjoyed bowling, and outings to IronPigs games, Pocono Raceway and the annual resident ball. He was named king of the ball in 2011. He enjoyed watering the garden at Good Shepherd, and sitting and talking in the swing outside. Scott's other passions were country music, strawberry milkshakes, Knoebels Amusement Resort, and Walt Disney World which he visited several times. He was a member of the Trucksville United Methodist Church and a 20-year social member of the Trucksville Volunteer Fire Company where he passed out tickets at the company's annual children's Christmas party.

Jo-Ann says the Good Shepherd family, including his many friends there, enriched Scott's life in so many ways. "I believe living there did maximize his health," she says. "It broadened his ability to take part in activities. Most of all, they loved him like he was their own. I truly believe that with all my heart. I know. I saw it."



*Scott Sarley, king of the resident ball, 2011*

# IN MEM

## Aaron Oleksa

When Aaron Oleksa was bitten by the media bug, it bit early in life and it bit hard. First at Eyer Junior High School where he read the morning news on the school's television station, then at Penn State where his passion for film and video led to a bachelor's degree in media studies. Fantasy and science fiction were Aaron's favorite film genres with *Star Wars* topping the list.

"His dream was to work with George Lucas some day," says Aaron's mother, Brenda, referring to the renowned writer/director who originated the *Star Wars* franchise. "Steven Spielberg, too. I can't begin to tell you the producers and directors he admired."

But Crohn's disease, diagnosed when Aaron was in middle school, began robbing Aaron of his ability to walk, eventually leading to complications resulting in his death on December 16, 2017, at the age of 34. What remained untouched by the disease though was Aaron's keen intellect. "He had a sharp mind in a body that was just failing him," says Brenda.

Aaron was born in Allentown on May 28, 1983 to Brenda and Joel Oleksa who lost no time in introducing Aaron to a favorite pastime of theirs, camping. "Aaron's first camping outing was when he was 10 weeks old," says Brenda. "He slept in the sleeping bag with us."

Along with his sister Liz, Aaron grew to love outdoor recreation. A favorite family spot was Hills Creek State Park in Wellsboro. "We would rent a little row boat and sit in the middle of the lake and fish all day long until our knees were so sunburned we couldn't move," says Brenda.

Aaron became especially close with his nephew, Logan, now 13. "He fell hopelessly in love with that nephew and Aaron devoted his life to Logan," says Brenda. Logan would crawl on Aaron's lap or cozy up in bed with him and watch movies together.



After caring for Aaron for most of his life, Brenda and Joel decided it was time for them and Aaron to pursue their own paths of independence. In 2015, Aaron came to live at the Good Shepherd Home-Bethlehem. The adjustment was not easy but Aaron made friends and was named king of the royal court the first year he attended the annual resident ball. But Aaron's greatest joy was getting on the bus and going to Lehigh Valley Sporting Clays. "He would go every month," says Brenda. "He lived for that. That was his escape. He realized that this was as good as it was going to get. He embraced his independence."

## John Gorman

John Gorman was never able to drive but that didn't diminish his love of cars or the wealth of knowledge he acquired during his 58 years. John, a resident of the Good Shepherd Home-Bethlehem, died on October 14, 2017, having lived a life with some personal achievements and joy despite the cerebral palsy that challenged him every day.



"John's hobby was cars," says his brother Dan. "He had people drive him around to car dealerships just to visit. He knew everything about cars. He used to go to the car show in Philadelphia every year and he would tell the sales people things that even they didn't know about new models coming out."

John's passion for cars was evident from an early age. "As a kid I would build little garages for him out of scrap wood so he could park his toy cars," says Dan who is a carpenter by trade.

John was born in Philadelphia on September 22, 1960, a son of Jack and Delores Gorman. The couple loved and nurtured John for decades, defying medical advice when John was born that he be placed in a special home for children with disabilities. John kept moving forward though. He graduated from the McDonald School in Warminster and then worked for the Bucks Association for Retarded Citizens for 25 years. "When his check came in the mail he would ask our mother how much he made. It was a small amount but in his mind he was productive," says Dan.

John was one of four sons and enjoyed the embrace of a large extended family who he loved and who loved him in return. "He was very family oriented," says Dan. "He just loved all of our cousins. Our dad was from Ireland and several of his first cousins came to live here so they were always around."

As a child, John spent summers at a camp for children with disabilities. John loved the beach and vacationed with his family at Cape May, New Jersey. Years later, when accessibility regulations changed for people with disabilities, John was able to go in the ocean using a specially-designed chair. John loved ice cream, Shirley Temple and attending Good Shepherd's annual resident ball.

After John's parents passed away, Dan stepped in as caregiver until John needed a greater level of care. After visiting Good Shepherd, Dan knew he found the right place for his brother to live surrounded by friends, love and compassionate care. "His quality of life couldn't have been any better," says Dan. "He had a whole staff looking after him. He liked it very much. He was always happy."

# IN MEMORIAM



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