Dear Friends,

As I write this, the weather is still warm and humid, and cooler temperatures have yet to prevail. From my office window, I have a view of our south Allentown campus with its winding pathways, flowering gardens, and bronze sculpture of the late Rev. Dr. Conrad Raker holding up a little girl, her crutches extended like wings.

The sculpture, beautifully executed by Czechoslovakian-born sculptor Karel Mikolas, is a lasting testament to the Raker family legacy of compassion that guides us in our mission more than 100 years later. And as I look at it, I see in the child’s lofty position a symbol of what we strive to do for our patients every day—give them wings to experience life as fully and as independently as possible.

For each patient who comes through our doors, independence means different things. How they get there is a uniquely personal journey. It’s never the same for any two people, just as no two patients are the same for any of our incredibly skilled caregivers.

Tom Horwath of Coopersburg, the man you’ll meet in this month’s cover story, counts many blessings in his life. Good Shepherd is now among them. Tom experienced our expertise on many levels starting with an extended stay in the Good Shepherd Specialty Hospital and ending with outpatient therapy at our Coopersburg site.

As with so many people who come to us, the sudden onset of an acute illness changed Tom’s life drastically, bringing him deep pain and despair. Tom developed Guillain-Barré syndrome, a neurological disorder affecting the nerves. After a month-long stay at our Specialty Hospital, Tom was transferred to the Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Hospital in Allentown for the second stage of his recovery. Finally, with great joy, he went home to continue therapy at our outpatient site in Coopersburg.

Tom is slowly returning to doing the things he loves—cooking, gardening and enjoying his family. And, he has become a most enthusiastic champion of Good Shepherd. His heart brims with gratitude for everyone who played a role in bringing him through and ultimately, helping him take wing with a new appreciation for life.

God bless you,

Sally Gammon, FACHE
President & CEO

Cover photograph: Randy Monceaux
There was one thing Tom Horwath wanted out of life, and that was to die. Unable to even blink his eyelids or speak because of the ventilator that kept his lungs functioning, Tom weakly tried mouthing words to his wife of 45 years, Joanne, and their 41-year-old daughter, Kim Schaeffer, who stood by helplessly watching a husband, father and grandfather who’d lost his will to live.

Morphine was the only escape from the searing pain of raw, unseen nerve endings beneath Tom’s skin as he lay in his bed at Good Shepherd Specialty Hospital in Bethlehem, paralyzed by Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS), a debilitating neurological condition where the body’s own immune system turns on itself, attacking the protective coating of the peripheral nerves.

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“I wanted to die,” the 70-year-old Coopersburg resident says. “I couldn’t tell anybody the pain I felt. All I could do was hear. The pain was horrific. It felt like someone took a cigarette or poured hot boiling water on my hands.”

Tom’s odyssey began in mid-December 2011. After eating out, he and Joanne returned home where Tom later became violently ill. Severe back pain followed and he had trouble standing up from the couch where he’d been watching television.

The next morning, as Tom got out of bed, his legs buckled under him and he nearly fell. He also noticed his hands felt weak. Joanne rushed him to the emergency room and he was admitted to the hospital.

Things quickly began to take a turn for the worse. Tom’s bladder stopped functioning and as his paralysis progressed, he was put on a ventilator. Joanne watched in disbelief as her husband became sicker and sicker.

“The paralysis was moving up his body, it was taking his lungs,” says Joanne. “A nurse was telling him to breathe. He said, ‘I think I’m going to die. I can't breathe.’”

As Tom’s body was being taken hostage, all he could do was wonder why. “I kept asking God, ‘Why me?’” says Tom, his eyes filling with tears.

Joanne wondered the same thing. “I cried so much in the first 30 days,” she says.

After a spinal tap, Tom was diagnosed with GBS. Neither Tom nor Joanne had ever heard of it before. They learned that GBS often follows a viral or diarrheal illness, and, in a percentage of those patients, manifests itself after an upper respiratory infection or cold. In addition to the intestinal illness that hit Tom that night in December after eating out, he also had a bad cold for three weeks in October 2011.

Tom was no stranger to medical challenges — open heart surgery, gout and diabetes. But this one was testing him beyond anything he’d ever experienced. After a month in intensive care, Tom was transferred to Good Shepherd Specialty Hospital where one of the first goals was to wean him off the respirator.

“They were pushing every day, fifteen minutes more until by the end of a week, he was up to two hours breathing on his own,” says Kim. “They were trying to raise his spirits, to show him that he was coming along, even if he couldn’t see it. I never thought he’d make it. That was the hardest part for all of us. We wanted him to get better and he didn’t want to get better.”

Tom credits Dr. Rick Schall, director of psychology at Good Shepherd, with helping turn his attitude around. “I was so scared and he really made me feel comfortable with myself,” says Tom. “I love life. I love
Rick spent a lot of time listening to Tom, validating his feelings of fear and hopelessness which for many acutely ill patients is not uncommon.

“When people are that sick, they feel like they’re out of control and in Tom’s case, when his body was shutting down and he couldn’t even breathe or move on his own, it was profoundly frightening,” says Rick.

As they talked, Rick gently guided Tom towards the realization that he had a lot to live for: his wife and daughter, his son Robert, 39, living in New Jersey with his four grandsons, and his 7-year-old granddaughter Lola Schaeffer, with whom Tom has a special bond, having babysat for her until she was old enough to go to school.

“People latch on to reasons to live and those anchors help pull them through,” says Rick. “But Tom also had an innate strength of character, a good sense of humor and an incredibly supportive wife.”

He also had loving caregivers whose expertise was matched by their determination to see Tom reach the next level of recovery. Physical therapist Daryl Balano recalled having to do all Tom’s therapy while he was still in bed. “Just getting him to support himself while sitting on the edge of his bed was a major achievement because the only thing he could move was his head and neck,” she says.

Respiratory therapist, Diane Barnes, marvels at Tom’s recovery, recalling how challenging it was to wean him off the ventilator. Diane has cared for many GBS patients throughout her career, and not always with the best outcomes. “Tom’s recovery is the best I’ve ever seen in all my years,” she says. “It starts from within.”

“I’d even venture to say it’s a miracle,” adds Lynn Yacone, respiratory therapist.

After a month in Specialty Hospital, Tom was transferred to the Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Hospital in Allentown on Feb. 20, 2012.

“I think the hardest day was when he went from Specialty to Allentown,” says Kim. “Even getting him out of bed to sit in a chair was so hard. It was almost more than he could take and it was so hard to watch him struggle, but I realized afterward, that struggle is what made him better.”

Tom adds, “Therapy was rough. Those therapists really made me work. But when I first started to walk, it was amazing. They clapped, they cheered me on.”

Tom also had to learn how to swallow again after the breathing tube was removed. His attempts at feeding himself were heartbreaking for Joanne and Kim to watch. Food spilled on his shirt, seeming to rob him of the very dignity he was trying to recover. But with each mouthful, Tom was working towards greater independence and the ultimate goal of going home.

“We had to keep telling him how strong a person he was,” says Joanne, “that he could beat this. I think I got stronger through this too.”

Six weeks later in April, Tom was ready to go home. He chokes up recalling that day. “I never thought I’d see my home again,” he says.

He now continues therapy at Good Shepherd’s outpatient site in Coopersburg where he raves about the ongoing level of excellence that is helping him get stronger. He’s able to walk using a single-point cane, and is getting back to doing the things he loves; cooking, gardening, traveling, and playing with Lola. He still has pain in his hands and is working on strengthening his legs, but he is grateful to be alive.

“I’ve learned to appreciate people more,” he says. “I appreciate everything more; the grass, the trees, the sky, the ocean. Good Shepherd does it all. It is the best care. The staff at Specialty was outstanding plus the therapists at the rehab hospital in Allentown. What they did was thrilling.”

Your gifts are essential to our mission of helping people like Tom Horwath live life to the fullest. Please, won’t you make an online gift now at SweetCharityOnline.org or use the envelope in this issue. Thank you! Kim Horwath shares a daughter’s very personal perspective at SweetCharityOnline.org. Click on the Share Your Story link.

Learn more about Guillain-Barré Syndrome at www.gbs-cidp.org

Tom (center) with some of his extraordinary Specialty Hospital caregivers (L-R): Daryl Balano, physical therapist; Diane Barnes, respiratory therapist; Lynn Yacone, respiratory therapist; and Lori Imhof, RN.
The Greater Lehigh Valley Auto Dealers Association has been a friend and partner, donating a total of $75,000 to the Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Hospital Pediatric Unit in Bethlehem. Funds are raised from ticket sales to the Auto Show Gala Preview Party held at Lehigh University's Stabler Arena, giving GLVADA a chance not only to show the latest cars, but also a big heart.

We sat down with Andy Scott, one of GLVADA’s founding members, former president, and current board member, and Tom Kwiatek, GLVADA executive director, to talk about the organization’s philanthropic mission.

When was GLVADA formed?
Andy: It was formed in 1997 from three separate auto associations in Allentown, Bethlehem, and Easton. John Daub came up with the idea and got a few other leaders to buy into it and do an annual auto show. We pulled it together in about two months. Our first show in 1998 raised $25,000. Over the years, it’s gotten more and more financially successful and now we raise about $150,000.

Has philanthropy been a part of GLVADA’s mission from the beginning?
Andy: GLVADA is a non-profit and always has been. One of the things we wanted to do was change the image of the car dealers to a collective focus of charitable giving back to the community.

Tom: I think that auto dealers have been very very supportive of their communities.

When do we choose your charitable recipients?
Andy: Tom is the one who gave us a much more organized approach to this. He came up with the idea of a benefactor night at the show and a donation committee to review applications for grants and loans. We choose one organization every year to be the recipient for a minimum of three years. Our thrust is young people and we’ve given to 26 charitable causes over the years. We’ve had a good run and I think it’s just going to get better.”

Tom Kwiatek and Andy Scott
The All-American PICNIC

It was a red, white and blue kind of day at the Good Shepherd Home-Bethlehem where residents and family members gathered on Friday, June 22, for the annual All-American Picnic. Hamburgers, pork barbecue, potato salad, coleslaw, watermelon, and an array of desserts kept the crowd well-fed as Pete Begley, known as “The Stick Guy” for the unusual instrument he plays, serenaded. Thank you to the Bethlehem recreational therapy team for planning this wonderful event!

Good Shepherd is connected to our communities in so many ways. Every other month, Sweet Charity magazine brings you the stories that show our mission at work in the lives of people with disabilities and their families.

If you have a compelling story of how you feel connected to Good Shepherd, we’d like to hear about it. Perhaps you’re a grateful patient or a family member of someone who came to us for care. Or maybe you have a special memory from long ago that captures the mission and compassion of Good Shepherd.

Now, sharing your story has never been easier. Visit us online at SweetCharityOnline.org and click on “Share Your Story.” Be sure to include a photo. You can also send it in writing to: Elizabeth McDonald, Editor, Sweet Charity, Development, Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Network, 850 South 5th Street, Allentown, PA. 18103. Be sure to include a photo, your name, address, daytime phone number, and email if you have one.

We’ll take our favorite stories and post them online. You could even be featured in a future issue of Sweet Charity. Thanks for sharing your story with us!

Elizabeth McDonald
Editor, Sweet Charity
Proud Project SEARCH Graduates

It wasn’t just any graduation that brought together proud family members at the Conrad W. Raker Center on Wednesday, June 13. For these parents, school officials and the Good Shepherd staff who joined them, the matriculation of eight Project SEARCH high school students with learning disabilities was a celebration of extraordinary achievement and community partnerships. Project SEARCH and Good Shepherd teamed up to provide vocational training and on-the-job skills to these young people, better preparing them for employment after graduation. Good Shepherd was the first Project SEARCH site in the state and has helped mentor four classes of graduates. Three of this year’s graduates have already secured jobs. Two of them, Anthony Hanzel and Robert Palmer, have been hired by Good Shepherd in maintenance and environmental services. Anthony is pictured with mentors and maintenance workers Brian Nothstein and Randy Weidner. “Tony is a welcome addition to the department,” says Randy. “He has a good work ethic and is always smiling. Project SEARCH is wonderful. I’m very honored to help in whatever way I can.”

Honored to Give Back

Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Network was presented with a donation of $10,000 from the Greater Woodstone Open, a golf tournament held in June at Woodstone Country Club, Danielsville. More than 60 teams participated in the three-day event. "Woodstone Country Club was proud to make a charitable donation to Good Shepherd at this year’s Open," says Jacob Longley, Woodstone director of marketing. “We have always supported the community, and Good Shepherd has been there for everyone who is in need of its services. It was our honor to give something back to this wonderful organization for all that it does for everyone in our community.” Pictured from left: Kevin Edwards, Woodstone PGA director of golf; Tali Aguila, Good Shepherd recruitment specialist; David Lyons, Good Shepherd vice president for development; Rob Grow, Woodstone general manager; and Gregg Meyer, Woodstone PGA head golf professional.

Wells Fargo Grant Benefits Kids

Cynthia Garcia, assistant vice president and personal banker at Wells Fargo, had lots to smile about when she visited Good Shepherd’s outpatient pediatric program to award a $15,000 grant. Funds will support such things as direct care from physicians and therapists, the purchase of assistive technology and charitable care for children whose families are in need of financial assistance. “Good Shepherd’s outpatient pediatric program is such a wonderful resource for children and their families,” says Cynthia. “It’s been there for my daughter and it’s been there for other Wells Fargo employees too. By supporting such a worthwhile program, Wells Fargo gives back to the community and its employees, helping to ensure that our children get the very best.” The grant, administered through the Wells Fargo Foundation, is the fourth such grant given to Good Shepherd over the past five years.

Grateful Parents Hold Fund Raiser

Grateful for the wonderful care their daughter received at the Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Hospital Pediatric Unit, parents Tony and Diane Fragnito of Coplay raised $1,220 at a fund raiser held at their bar, Fragnito’s Place, on May 18th and 19th. “Celebrity” bartenders were friends, customers and relatives who donated their tips along with proceeds from a 50/50 raffle. Christina was diagnosed with a brain tumor in September 2010. She underwent two brain surgeries followed by two stays at the pediatric unit to deal with the medical complexities that ensued, among them paralysis on her right side and the loss of most of her vision. Read more at SweetCharityOnline.org on the “Good News & Great Gifts” page. Learn how your donations to our Grateful Patient Program are a great way to say “thank you” and support our mission.
The Bakers believe it is their calling to help others achieve a better life. Through the Dexter F. & Dorothy H. Baker Foundation, they have supported some 50 charitable causes, among them Good Shepherd’s outpatient pediatric program. Their generosity helped fund programs for children with autism and other developmental disabilities, the feeding clinic, and the purchase of assistive technology for learning, literacy and alternative communication. The Bakers have also sponsored support groups and provided charitable care for children, regardless of a family’s ability to afford doctor and therapy visits.

The Finks have been supporting Good Shepherd philanthropically for more than 20 years. Their gifts were integral in building the pediatric rehabilitation program, and they have been faithful supporters of Good Shepherd’s events, including the Golf & Tennis Invitational and Gala in the Garden. They also have served as hosts of Good Shepherd’s Palm Beach Florida Friends event since 2009. Rod also served on the board of trustees finance committee for three years.

An avid tennis player since his youth, Ray has chaired the tennis portion of Good Shepherd’s Golf & Tennis Invitational for more than 15 years. Ray’s dedication has helped attract a core group of devoted followers every year who come for the camaraderie as much as the good-natured competition. Ray first became acquainted with Good Shepherd in 1983 when he worked for Alvin H. Butz, Inc., on the expansion of the rehabilitation hospital. He has served on Good Shepherd’s board of trustees.

Jim has been a Good Shepherd employee for 25 years and manager of the Kutztown outpatient location for most of that time. Jim’s entire staff of 12 nominated him for the Raker Spirit Award and lauded him for having the kind of attitude “that inspires great loyalty to him as a manager and as a person.” Jim’s community service is extensive and includes lending his time and talent to such projects as a back care program at local elementary schools and community health fairs. He also is very involved with his church, leading praise and worship, and participating in the men’s ministry group, youth events, and serving on the church board.

On Thursday, June 14, friends gathered at Grace Lutheran Church on St. John Street in Allentown for the 27th Annual Raker Memorial Awards celebrating the Raker family legacy and some of Good Shepherd’s most valued supporters. Recipients were Dexter and Dorothy Baker of Allentown and Naples, Florida; Rod and Madeline Fink of West Palm Beach, Florida; and Ray Federici of Orefield. The Raker Spirit Award, given to a Good Shepherd associate who best exemplifies the Raker spirit of compassion, was given to Jim Kwiatkowski, manager of the Kutztown outpatient site.
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.

Gifts were received from March 30 through June 13, 2012.
In Memoriam

Elsie Anne Eveland

The Good Shepherd family mourns the passing of longtime resident Elsie Anne Eveland, 91, who passed away on Thursday, June 21, 2023, at the Conrad W. Raker Center. Born in Tomasdend, Pa., on March 3, 1921, Anne, as everyone called her, was one of five siblings born to Edward and Mattie (Sier) Eveland. She was the last surviving member of her father’s side of the family. Anne was only 10 years old when she came to live at Good Shepherd. She loved to shop and wore her jewelry with style. She enjoyed outings to the Great Allentown Fair, the annual Raker resident ball, and was a fan of country-western singer Mickey Gilley. Anne was much loved and her endearing smile and sweet disposition will be greatly missed.

Memorial gifts to Good Shepherd may be made at SweetCharityOnline.org or by using the envelope in this issue.

Fly, Eagles...

Residents of the Good Shepherd Home were thrilled to get a close look at the Eagles fall line-up during the team’s annual training camp at Lehigh University’s Goodman campus. As in years past, the players and Coach Andy Reid graciously signed autographs for the residents and posed for pictures. Your gifts to Good Shepherd help make recreational outings like this possible. Please, support our mission by making an online donation at SweetCharityOnline.org or use the envelope in this issue. Thank you!
Something to Smile About!

Sweet Charity —
The Face of Philanthropy at Good Shepherd

Visit us at: SweetCharityOnline.org