On Thursday evening, November 21, 2014, 28-year-old Brian Ciotoli of Endicott, NY, was on his way to bed. He had worked all day at his job at the Association for Vision Rehabilitation and Employment in nearby Binghamton. His dad, Bob, was watching the football game on TV. Brian, who is visually impaired, stopped to ask him the score, then went to his room and climbed into bed.

“I really don’t remember much after that except waking up for a time in the ambulance,” Brian said. The ambulance was rushing him to Wilson Memorial Hospital in Binghamton.

Brian’s mom, Tina, does remember what happened that night – at least most of it. Sometime after everyone went to bed, Brian suffered a serious seizure. His parents heard his distress and quickly called 911. At the emergency department, he had another seizure — his body contorting in a violent way causing him to fracture a vertebra which resulted in spinal cord compression. He was paralyzed from the waist down.

After an MRI determined the extent of Brian’s injury, surgeon Daniel Galyon, MD, operated on him to relieve the pressure on his spinal cord. Tina credits Dr. Galyon’s surgical expertise, along with the tremendous support from family, friends, and their parish priest for getting them through the initial few weeks in the hospital.

But, now it was time to decide where Brian should go for rehabilitation.

“It’s only a couple of hours away and we wanted the best chance for him,” noted Tina. On December 4, Brian arrived at Sunnyview.

Tina recalls that as soon as he arrived, “the staff whisked him in and started working with him – immediately!” Brian remembers it, too. “Everyone kept coming into my room – Lynne Nicolson, MD, my physiatrist, the therapists, the social worker, the nurses – asking me questions and working with me and my family to come up with my treatment plan,” he said.

Upon admission, Brian was unable to move his legs, although he did have some faint feeling in them. “I could feel, but I couldn’t move,” he recalled.

Tiffany Schardin, MS, OTR/L, worked with Brian throughout his stay. “Our main goal was to develop his self-care skills (bathing, dressing, grooming and toileting) and his ability to transfer (to get himself in and out of bed, on and off various functional surfaces such as the toilet or tub) and to sit unsupported on his own,” she said. Tiffany noted that they worked on strengthening his upper body and core muscles for stability.

According to Barbara Scheidel, DPT, Brian’s physical therapist, “Brian’s vision deficit definitely made things more challenging, both for him and me. I brought in a mobility specialist from the New York State Commission for the Blind to assist in teaching him to navigate in a manual...”
Welcome

In this issue of “Rehabilitation Insight,” we are pleased to introduce a young man from the Binghamton area who suffered a spinal cord injury late last year and share with you his great successes. When it came time to choose a place for rehabilitation, he and his family chose Sunnyview’s Center for Spinal Cord Injury. We are happy he did. I hope you enjoy the inspiring story of Brian Ciotoli’s “miraculous” recovery at Sunnyview.

You can learn all about Sunnyview’s Center for Spinal Cord Injury on page 4. Each and every day, the center’s expert staff combines compassionate, personalized care with state-of-the-art treatment and technology to help individuals like Brian regain independence after a life-altering spinal cord injury.

The program’s clinical outcomes are excellent. We are successful in getting a greater percentage of our patients back home than do other acute SCI programs throughout the nation, beating benchmarks by 8.5 percent, last year. Our average length of stay, of less than 19 days, also compares favorably with national benchmarks, speaking to not only our effectiveness but our efficiency. Additionally, we have extraordinarily high patient satisfaction with our program. In 2014, overall satisfaction was 100 percent, with all of our spinal cord patients saying they would recommend Sunnyview to family and friends.

Our reputation of clinical excellence and patient-centered care is well known. In the last five years we have treated nearly 400 patients from 29 counties in New York state as well as neighboring states.

Kudos to our staff for these impressive patient satisfaction scores and clinical outcomes! We care what our patients and families think and have worked diligently to exceed their expectations — not only in the spinal cord injury program — but throughout all our specialty service lines. We consistently have well over 98 percent of ALL patients report that they would recommend Sunnyview to others.

As always, thanks to everyone — physicians, staff, our patients and families, community friends, and our donors — for making Sunnyview the special place that it is.
New Technology at Sunnyview Reduces Patient Falls

Each year, between 700,000 and one million patients fall while in the hospital, according to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Although not every patient fall is preventable, hospitals across the country are using technology to help reduce the number of falls significantly and, more importantly, the injuries to patients often caused by a fall.

In September 2014, Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital began using AvaSys, a remote patient observation and communications platform that enables both visual and audio monitoring of patients. Currently, a technician can observe up to 15 patients using one of Sunnyview’s five portable monitors, or one of 10 permanently installed monitors in patient rooms. The monitors allow technicians to directly communicate with patients, and the system has STAT alarm capabilities for instances that require emergency notification of the caregivers on the unit. To protect the privacy of the patient, monitors do not record patient activity. And with use of the monitor’s audio communication system, privacy screens allow for patient care without visual observation.

“The goal of using the AvaSys monitors is to decrease the risk of patient falls,” explains Michele Courman, DNP, manager of risk and quality improvement at Sunnyview. According to Dr. Courman, Sunnyview has seen a significant reduction in the number of falls, particularly in their brain injury unit where there are eight monitors permanently installed. “We concentrated our efforts with monitors on the brain injury unit because that population tends to have a higher risk for falls,” she added. The rate of falls in the brain injury unit decreased from 10.26 falls per 1,000 patient days before the use of AvaSys monitors to 7.32 falls per 1,000 patient days after the use of AvaSys monitors.

In addition to a reduction in the rate of patient falls, video monitoring reduces the cost associated with the use of 1:1 sitters. Patients may be less agitated by not having sitters directly at their bedside. Also, skilled monitor technicians are able to intervene or address a patient’s immediate needs quickly. Use of the AvaSys system has greatly improved both patient and staff satisfaction. Patients are able to stay in a peaceful and therapeutic environment instead of being placed in a stimulus bound hallway in order to be supervised. And staff is able to complete tasks without interruptions knowing that someone is monitoring their restless or confused patient. Eighty percent of staff indicated that the monitors provided a direct positive benefit to them and patients. In fact, use of the AvaSys monitors has been such a success that Sunnyview recently purchased 15 more monitors, which will be installed later this year.

The AvaSys patient monitoring system was purchased through the use of philanthropic dollars, and would not have been possible without the generosity and support of our donors.

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A Miraculous Recovery

Continued from page 1

wheelchair which was very helpful.”

“Brian’s parents were here every day and provided great support,” she added. Brian’s rehabilitation nurse, Lyndsey Stammel, RN, said that despite his visual deficits, Brian was able to learn both bowel and bladder training, which is quite challenging for a patient with paraplegia. “He was very self-disciplined and motivated to be as independent as possible. Through his entire stay, he remained happy and optimistic. Though his family support team was stellar — which we know is key to recovery — he never worked as though his future was to be dependent upon them.”

His mom remembers “amazing progress right from the start … and not just small improvements, but big improvements, too.” After a few weeks, Brian started using Sunnyview’s TheraStride Locomotor Training System, technology that is based on the knowledge that the nervous system is able to develop new motor pathways. Funded through philanthropic donations, the system helps patients with spinal cord and other traumatic injuries to improve their walking ability.

On January 18, 2015, Brian was a few days from discharge, but according to Tina, “something miraculous happened! Brian started to move his legs!”

Continued on page 5
The Center for Spinal Cord Injury

According to the National Spinal Cord Injury Statistical Center at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, approximately 276,000 people today are living with a spinal cord injury – with about 12,500 new cases occurring each year.

While a spinal cord injury can turn an individual’s life upside down, rehabilitation programs such as the Center for Spinal Cord Injury at Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital provide skilled and expert care and treatment so that patients with spinal cord injuries can lead productive, fulfilling, independent lives.

What is a spinal cord injury? Usually, it begins with a sudden, traumatic blow to the spine that fractures or dislocates the vertebrae. While most injuries do not completely sever the spinal cord, fractures and compression of the vertebrae can destroy the nerves that carry signals to the brain.

According to Paul Novak, program director of the Neuro-Rehab Institute at Sunnyview, “Simply put, complete spinal cord injuries refer to injuries that result in the complete loss of function below the point of injury.”

Paul continued, “An incomplete injury, on the other hand, refers to a spinal cord injury in which some feeling or movement is still evident below the point of injury. The good news is that incomplete spinal cord injuries are more common than complete injuries, mainly because we now understand how important it is to immediately reduce swelling of the spinal cord following a spinal cord injury.”

Incomplete injuries can vary greatly. They can result in some feeling but little or no movement, some movement but little or no feeling, and everything in between. The extent and severity of an incomplete injury can usually be safely determined about six to eight weeks following the injury, once spinal shock has subsided and the swelling has gone down.

Jody Henry, RN, CRRN, said that patients with spinal cord injuries who come to Sunnyview receive rehabilitation therapies, skill-building activities and counseling that will provide them with the social and emotional support they need to successfully re-enter the community.

“The spinal cord rehabilitation team at Sunnyview includes a physiatrist (a doctor trained in physical medicine and rehabilitation); rehabilitation nurses; psychologists; physical, occupational, speech and recreational therapists; social workers; and other specialists. Together with the patient and family, they develop a customized rehabilitation treatment plan to meet the patient’s needs and goals,” noted Jody.

She explained that each patient’s individualized treatment plan consists of a vast array of rehabilitation services, such as strengthening and endurance training and swallowing/language evaluation and therapy. She also notes that depending on the injury, the plan may include specialty services designed specifically for the patient with a spinal cord injury, including a ventilator weaning program; wheelchair assessments using a unique pressure-mapping system; bowel/bladder management; and outpatient services in the Neurological Center.

“We are especially proud of our innovative technology which was purchased through philanthropic funding, including the ReWalk™ Exoskeleton Robotic system – a first-of-its-kind technology in the greater Capital Region and one of only a few in New York State – that helps paraplegics and individuals with spinal cord injuries walk again; and the TheraStride Locomotor Training System which is based on knowledge of the nervous system’s ability to develop new motor pathways and helps improve walking ability for individuals with spinal cord injury,” Jody continued.

“The severity of the injury determines the type of rehabilitation needed, yet whatever the severity, Sunnyview is there to help the patient achieve the highest level of functioning and independence possible,” she added.

Common causes of spinal cord injuries in the U.S.

- Auto and motorcycle accidents are the leading cause of spinal cord injuries, according to the National Spinal Cord Injury Statistical Center.
- Falls account for more than 25 percent of spinal cord injuries. After age 65, a spinal cord injury is most often caused by a fall.
- Approximately 15 percent of spinal cord injuries result from violent crimes, often involving gunshot and knife wounds.

- Sports and recreation injuries, such as impact sports and diving in shallow water, cause about nine percent of spinal cord injuries.
- Alcohol. Alcohol use is a factor in about 1 out of every 4 spinal cord injuries.
- Diseases. Cancer, arthritis, osteoporosis and inflammation of the spinal cord also can cause spinal cord injuries.
Do You Want A Reliable Cash Flow In Uncertain Times?
A Charitable Gift Annuity is for you!

It can serve as an alternative source of income for those ages 60 and over that offers higher interest rates and a guaranteed cash flow for the rest of your life while supporting your favorite charity – Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital!

You can obtain these benefits and save on taxes while helping the most vulnerable in our community through a charitable gift annuity which is a contract between you and Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital Foundation.

In exchange for your gift of cash or appreciated stocks, we will give you an annuity contract backed by Sunnyview assets that guarantees fixed payments for life! Even if the stock market declines or the interest rates fall, your payments remain the same!

The rate you receive depends on your age. The older in age you are, the higher the rate and larger the payment.

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Why establish a gift annuity?
• Gift annuities offer higher payments than investments like CD’s.
• The annuity rate is fixed for the rest of your life.
• You will receive a significant income tax charitable deduction.
• In most cases, a significant portion of the payments is tax-free.
• If the annuity is funded with appreciated assets like stocks or bonds, you will be able to reduce your capital gains taxes.
• You can direct your gift to a hospital area you choose. Whatever area you select, you will be helping Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital provide high quality acute rehabilitative care to your friends, family and neighbors.

What is the next step?
Contact Foundation Executive Director Kathie Ziobrowski at (518) 386-3610 or email her at Kathleen.Ziobrowski@sphp.com for a free, 100 percent confidential, no obligation illustration to find out how you can benefit from a Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital gift annuity.

A Miraculous Recovery
Continued from page 3

“All the staff members were ‘going crazy’ when they saw me move my legs,” remembered Brian. “It didn’t take them long to decide to keep me until the end of the month. They really got me going then!”

“Once Brian had a return of some movement in his lower extremities, we transitioned to working on standing with assistance and having him bring his legs up onto a mat or into bed without just having to rely on his leg straps,” added Tiffany.

In anticipation of going home, Brian, his family, and therapists traveled back to Endicott for a home visit. With a few minor adjustments, including the addition of a stair lift, his home was ready for him. Barbara, his physical therapist, had also called the rehab facility in Binghamton to discuss Brian’s ongoing outpatient therapy to be sure they were prepared to continue Brian’s treatment plan and help him on his successful road to recovery.

On January 31, Brian went home. His mom said, “I can’t say enough about the staff at Sunnyview – they were so professional, but they had a human side, too. They prepared him well — once he was home, he was able to transfer so effortlessly. That took a lot of pressure off my husband and me.”

“Brian is such an inspiration to us,” Tina added. “He continues outpatient therapy twice a week and was fitted with ankle braces. He is walking with the help of a walker and has started using crutches.”

He only uses the wheelchair when he is home alone and hasn’t used the stair lift in months.

“My doctor’s prognosis was that I would walk again with assistance and I’m doing that now,” said Brian. “I certainly expect to be walking on my own in the next six months and eventually going back to work.”
Why a Wish List?

Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital maintains a capital budget to purchase much-needed equipment. Every item from the wish list that the Sunnyview Foundation is able to fill is one less strain on our not-for-profit budget.

Thank you for helping us to fulfill our mission of improving lives of people with disabilities and their families!

**Top priority items needed:**

**Hospital-wide - Low Position Beds**  $6,000 (many needed)

Sunnyview has used low position beds successfully to minimize the potential for injury with patients at risk of falling. Increasing the number of beds will allow Sunnyview to meet peak demand when there are a large number of at-risk inpatients.

**Speech - Assessment Tool**  $475

The Student Version of the Functional Assessment of Verbal Reasoning and Executive Strategies (S-FAVRES) is designed for use with adolescents with traumatic brain injury with higher level cognitive communication deficits. These tests evaluate challenges in cognitive communication skills that are under development in adolescents such as sarcasm, humor, intent, gist, or central theme, social communication, verbal reasoning, problem solving, meta-cognition, executive functions, and social perception. The test examines the interplay between cognitive, communication, and emotional regulation skills in real-life, integrative tasks. They include timed scores to evaluate speed of processing.

**Cardiopulmonary - EKG**  $13,000

An upgrade to our current EKG system will allow patients to be engaged in their therapy in many areas of the hospital while their heart is being monitored. If we cannot obtain the upgrade, patients will have to stay in their bed and be monitored, delaying their therapy.

**Neuropsychology - Wechsler Intelligence Scale**  $1,653

Our neuropsychology department works with children and administers testing to measure intellectual ability. The department is seeking to purchase the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for children which will be administered to all children treated by the department.

**Hospital Wide - Automated Vital Signs Monitor**  $2,500 each (two needed)

This technology measures non-invasive blood pressure, temperature and pulse rate in 30 seconds or less.

**Nursing - Medication Bar Code Readers**  $40,000

Sunnyview would like to purchase bar code readers for medication administration which help prevent human error in the distribution of prescription medications.

**Hospital Wide - Barco Loungers**  $2,500 each (10 needed)

To be used for patient/visitor seating in their rooms. They can also be used for therapy for activities of daily living by re-teaching a patient how to get in and out of a chair.

**Studio Arts Project - Sponsor a Student**  $1,250 each (thirteen needed)

Your sponsorship covers instruction and materials for a student for one year. Students learn materials education and arts education in a supportive and inspiring environment.

**Post-Stroke Group - Sponsor a Member**  $1,000 each (20 needed)

Your sponsorship covers continuation of therapy to maintain or increase skills lost to traumatic brain injury or stroke. Post-Stroke Group gives members a chance to work on the skills they need to address, socialize with others going through similar issues, and allows respite for families.

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**Thank You!**

There are many ways Sunnyview relies on philanthropic funds to further our mission to improve the lives of people with disabilities and the lives of their families. One way is through grant funding.

We are pleased to announce some new funders and some longstanding funders who help us achieve our mission, and we thank them for all of their support!

- Berkshire Bank donated $1,500 for the Schenectady Pediatric Head Start program’s early child development program.
- The Charles R. Wood Foundation supported Sunnyview through a grant of $30,000 for a new fleet of specialized wheelchairs for our Neuro Rehab Institute.
- Hudson River Bank & Trust Company Foundation gave $3,775 for much needed cardiopulmonary equipment.
- J.L. McDonald Foundation gave a first time gift of $5,000 to Sunnyview for general support of the hospital.
- Scotia Rotary donated $500 towards a new transfer car which will better simulate a patient’s own home vehicle.
- Soroptimist of Schenectady supported Sunnyview’s Lymphedema program with a $700 donation for garments and bandaging for women and children post-cancer.
- Stewart’s Holiday Wish program gave $2,000 for pediatric adaptive toys for Speech and Hearing.
- WGY Wish gave $400 in support of expressive language testing for the Schenectady Pediatric Head Start program.
Sunnyview’s Day at the Races

Sunnyview’s Day at the Races, held at historic Saratoga Race Track on Friday, August 14, was a tremendous success raising more than $61,000! Proceeds from Day at the Races will be used to purchase a C-Arm medical imaging device. Based on X-ray technology, the C-Arm results in less radiation exposure, and is less invasive and more comfortable for patients. The C-Arm device has greater flexibility in the examination process, which can help immensely in neurologic and cardiac imaging. Thank you so very much to our sponsors and attendees for making the day a success and for furthering our ability to serve the rehabilitation needs of our community.

Day at the Races Steering Committee member Lynne Nicolson, MD (far left), Co-Chair Andrea Golub (middle back) and friends enjoy the day.

Sunnyview CEO Chip Eisenman presents a very surprised raffle winner, Paula Granger, with the horse stirrup necklace. A very special thank you to Sondra’s Fine Jewelry for their on-going support!

(l to r) Sunnyview Foundation Board members Mark Meigher, Jim Nolan, PhD and Renee Walrath bet Jim has the winning ticket.

Day at the Races Steering Committee member Lynne Nicolson, MD (far left), Co-Chair Andrea Golub (middle back) and friends enjoy the day.

(l to r) Wally Graham, Louise Coffman, and Bob and Mary Ann Finnecy strategize their bets.

(l to r) Wally Graham, Louise Coffman, and Bob and Mary Ann Finnecy strategize their bets.
The Viewpoint Gallery Reception

The Viewpoint Gallery Reception was held on Wednesday, September 23, at Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital’s Viewpoint Gallery. The reception featured the most recent acquisitions to the gallery as well works of the Studio Arts Project students.

The Viewpoint Gallery, located at Sunnyview, consists of artwork created by artists with physical disabilities. The gallery was created as a means to show patients that there is life beyond their disability, and it serves as a teaching and inspirational tool. Currently, the gallery features over 130 pieces of work all purchased through our larger fundraising event, Art for the View, an international juried show of artwork by people with physical disabilities. The gallery is continually expanding its collection to inspire patients and visitors to reach beyond their limitation. It also encourages them to explore their own creativity, and foster an appreciation for artists with physical disabilities by learning about their accomplishments through their work and the stories of their lives.

Founded in 2002, The Studio Arts Project provides an art program for our students that fosters creativity, independence, dignity and community integration.

“Anyone for Wine” by Gail Arrington, a student of The Studio Arts Project.

Reception guests enjoy a tantalizing selection of hors d’oeuvres.