



HOME HEALTH

WINTER 2010

CONNECTION

304.263.5680 • www.PanhandleHomeHealth.org

In high school, Mason Ellsworth was named 1st chair bassoonist for the state of West Virginia. He played lead guitar for the jazz band at Jefferson High School and was a Tenor II singer and drummer for the Jefferson Pop Singers. Mason had just graduated and was looking forward to attending Shepherd University. He was awarded a scholarship and was going to major in music. His goal was to play bassoon in the orchestra.

On a rainy day in July of 2008, all of those plans changed for this 18-year-old Jefferson County student. Mason was involved in a collision with a truck on Country Club Road. He was initially taken to Jefferson Hospital and then flown to Shock Trauma in Baltimore, where he remained until September of 2008 in ICU in a coma from a severe head injury. The family was told initially that he wouldn't survive, but Mason proved to be a fighter. From Shock Trauma, he was moved to a rehab unit at Bryn Mawr Rehabilitation Hospital in Pennsylvania, where he stayed until July of 2009.

When it came time to make the decision between a nursing home facility and the family home, Mason's mom, Sylvia said, "It felt right to bring Mason home to recuperate." Because of the severity of his injuries, many changes to the home were necessary. Once the need became known in the community, a plumbing company donated and installed a sink and shower that was wheelchair accessible, flooring was donated and friends came to install dry wall and finished the garage into a functional space for Mason. Mason's mom indicated



that "she and her husband, Brian, couldn't have made all of the necessary changes if it hadn't been for the support of the community."

From the first day that Mason arrived home, Panhandle Home Health provided the skilled services of a nurse, physical therapist, occupational therapist, speech therapist, and home health aide to assist with Mason's medical needs. Mason's mom said that "she couldn't say enough good things about the care that Mason received from the staff of Panhandle Home Health." It has been a little more than a year since coming home, and Mason continues to make progress in his recovery. He no longer needs the services of Panhandle Home Health, but Sylvia states, "We still stay in touch with the staff who cared for Mason."

The community of Shepherdstown and surrounding areas continue to

support the Ellsworth family through fundraisers which have helped to purchase a wheelchair accessible van that enables the family to take Mason out for rides or to appointments. Mason has improved to the point of being able to paint watercolors, which are being sold at local fundraisers.

His quick smile and bright eyes tell the story of being loved and cared for in the comfort and familiarity of his own home. Sylvia gets support two days a week from Berkeley Senior Services for caregiver respite, and she points out that "of course, Mason's two sisters come home to help as often as possible." She also participates in a local TBI Support Group that meets the second Tuesday of every month at Berkeley Senior Services in Martinsburg. Turn to page 2 for more information on TBI.

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From the Executive Director



*Lisa R. Bivens, RN,
Executive Director*

As 2010 comes to a close, most of us tend to pause, look back and see what we have accomplished throughout the year. Our purpose is to not only feel good about our growth and successes, but also to learn from our failures. I was always raised to believe that everything happens for a reason and no matter how bad or good a period of my life has been – it has been for a purpose. We're supposed to learn from our past experiences and therefore develop some form of expertise in that area. But we can learn from each other as well.

In John C. Maxwell's book, "Running with the Giants", Old Testament heroes are those providing us with wisdom and encouragement to turn our modern day challenges into victories. The reader learns about the hero and how he or she handled a particular set of circumstances. It is in understanding their successes or failures that the reader is to learn about life and leadership.

Panhandle Home Health has been in operation for nearly 35 years with over 436 years of combined experience! Nearly half of the staff at Panhandle Home Health have 10 years or more experience in our community as home care providers. I am "running with giants" every day! Home care providers are our modern day heroes. They face the challenges of the environment, technology and ill patients on a daily basis. I learn from them on a regular basis and am thankful for the lessons they provide. I watch as the clerical staff person answers the phone with a smile on her face no matter how she is feeling and as the Home Health Aide returns to the office after a long day to help with an agency project. I watch as the nurse who has seen the evolution of home care over time, adapts to the technology that she is provided. They teach me how important it is to adapt to change, to reach out to my co-workers and to face each day with a positive attitude!

The challenge of providing home care in our community will continue, but if we look to our "giants" we can meet that challenge with success!

What is Traumatic Brain Injury?

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), a form of acquired brain injury, occurs when a sudden trauma causes damage to the brain. TBI can result when the head suddenly and violently hits an object, or when an object pierces the skull and enters brain tissue. Symptoms of a TBI can be mild, moderate, or severe, depending on the extent of the damage to the brain. A person with a mild TBI may remain conscious or may experience a loss of consciousness for a few seconds or minutes. Other symptoms of mild TBI include headache, confusion, lightheadedness, dizziness, blurred vision or tired eyes, ringing in the ears, bad taste in the mouth, fatigue or lethargy, a change in sleep patterns, behavioral or mood changes, and trouble with memory, concentration, attention, or thinking. A person with a moderate or severe TBI may show these same symptoms, but may also have a headache that gets worse or does not go away, repeated vomiting or nausea, convulsions or seizures, an inability to awaken from sleep, dilation of one or both pupils of the eyes, slurred speech, weakness or numbness in the extremities, loss of coordination, and increased confusion, restlessness, or agitation. (National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke). To learn more about how to treat traumatic brain injuries, visit www.ninds.nih.gov.

Happy
Holidays

From the Staff at
Panhandle Home Health



**Please designate a gift to Panhandle Home Health.
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Be a Volunteer –

We Make It Easy

Just a couple of months ago, waiting in what seemed like an endless line at the grocery store I overheard a snippet of dialogue that went something like “yeah, I’ve always wanted to do some kind of volunteer work, but with the kids in sports now and with my schedule, I can’t find anything that I can do with the time I have available ... but I really do want to do something ...” Then all at once that little light bulb that hangs so idly over my head most of the time just lit up like the Fourth of July ... that’s what we need to do ... make it so that already busy, involved, active neighbors can find the time to really make a difference in the life of someone in need in our community. And that is just what we have done in developing our Volunteer Program at Panhandle Home Health.

Our Volunteers really do make a difference one visit at a time. Maybe it’s the simple kindness of coming by to drop off a prescription to a man who cannot drive his car for a few weeks after surgery. Or it could be stopping in at lunchtime to share a quick meal and a couple of good stories with a woman who just came home after a long hospital stay and her daughter had to go back home, so now this woman is feeling alone and afraid and would love to have lunch with someone who will understand. Perhaps reading the local section of the newspaper to a long time neighbor who can no longer see well enough to keep up with the news here in town, the stuff you just can’t hear on TV. Or maybe just sitting and listening to a story from ‘the good old days’ when things were slower and we all seemed to have a lot more time to be together.

Panhandle Home Health provides comprehensive volunteer training that is individually scheduled and completed in a series of one hour segments, so that there is no need to take a whole day or series of evenings in order to get started. If you think you might be interested in hearing more about volunteering to be a part of our healthcare team, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Chris Johnson at 304-263-5680 ext 122 for details.

Thank You To Our Donors

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Financial Planning:

An Important Part of Health Care

Long-term financial planning is important for every adult. It is even more essential if you or a loved one are coping with a chronic or terminal illness. Since illness is unpredictable and costly, it is important to plan ahead and understand medical coverage options to ensure the security of the patient and the caregiver. For additional assistance with financial planning, contact a representative of Panhandle Home Health who will help you get the answers.

IN MEMORY OF

Margaret K. Hess
Margaret K. Hess
Elwood F. Lane
Wendy Trayer
Wendy Trayer
Wendy Trayer
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Just My Scent

Every effort was made to ensure that this list is complete, please excuse any omissions. Donations listed in this newsletter were received from June 1, 2010 through December 7, 2010. Naming opportunities are still available for our Building & Furnishing Fund. Please contact our office for more information.

Support the 2010 Annual Giving Campaign.

Our tree is growing, and there is still time for you to add a leaf in the name of a family member, caregiver or friend. Even a small gift of \$25 will make a difference in the life of one patient served by Panhandle Home Health. With your help, we will continue to help patients recover and recuperate in the comfort of their own homes during this Holiday Season.

Thank You To Our 2010 Donors:

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