

## New Therapy Features Interactive Exercises And Immediate Feedback For Patients

**S**eventeen-year-old Brian Powers hopes for a college basketball career.

But frequent ankle sprains often keep the high school basketball point guard on the sidelines instead of on the court.

After Brian's most recent sprain, his physician recommended physical therapy to strengthen his ankle to prevent surgery.

Physical therapists at Tampa General's Outpatient Rehabilitation Services on South Armenia Avenue incorporated the center's new Biodex Balance System into his program.

The system helps patients improve balance, agility, and develop muscle tone and strength. Patients stand on a movable platform while holding two side bars. They face a computer monitor that plays a series of tests and games specific to their therapy needs. Each test increases in difficulty as the patient progresses.

The interactive screens allow Brian to see his progress as he completes a series of exercises. The system's computer is programmed with several levels of exercises – each with a specific goal.

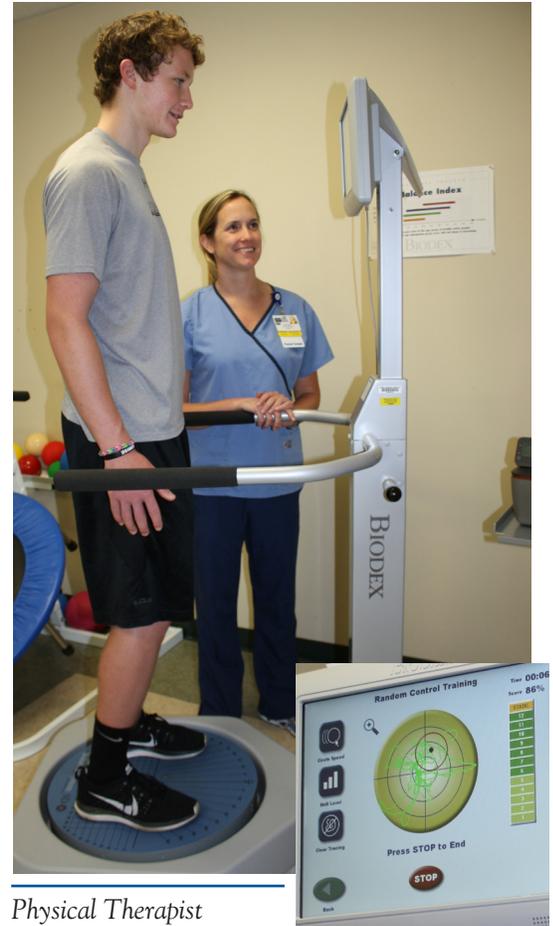
Brian stands on the platform as he watches a small ball on the screen. His goal is to keep the ball inside the center of the bull's-eye by shifting his weight from side to side.

It's one of the hardest exercises, especially when the level of difficulty increases, he said. "It has definitely helped me see how well my ankles are improving."

"The nice thing is we can do testing before, during, and after therapy to see how well he's doing," said Bethany Arvidson, Brian's physical therapist. "It gives us a baseline, and he sees his progress."

The Biodex System is also a valuable therapy for patients who are at risk of falling and for stroke patients who need to restore their balance and agility, explained Physical Therapist Ellen Eckelman.

"My senior patients love it," she said. **EM**



*Physical Therapist Bethany Arvidson observes as high school student Brian Powers completes a series of exercises on the Biodex System. Its monitor displays fun interactive exercises that increase in difficulty as he progresses.*

*Patients stand on the movable platform and shift their weight from side to side and try to keep the ball inside the center of the bull's-eye.*

# Showcasing Area Recreational Resources

The Rehabilitation Center held its first Community Resource Awareness Fair in Tampa's Hyde Park Village last fall which featured more than a dozen local organizations that offer recreational activities and services to children and adults with limited abilities.

"There are so many resources out there, and not everyone knows about them," said Nita Kidiyoor, manager of Outpatient and Pediatric Rehabilitation and Audiology Services. "We wanted to bring them together in one location, but away from the hospital setting."

"Everyone goes to therapy, but there are other ways to stay active and have fun in life," she said.

Visitors learned about recreational activities – such as rock climbing, water skiing and kayaking – available in St. Petersburg for people with illnesses, disabilities or other conditions. The New Tampa Family YMCA provided information about its adaptive swimming, basketball, cheerleading, and walk and run groups.

Representatives from the Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology (FAAST), located at Tampa General, showcased the variety of assistive technology devices they provide.

Other organizations included Canine Companions for Independence, and the non-profit organization VSAFlorida at the University of South Florida in Tampa which offers



The Rehabilitation Center held its first Community Resource Awareness Fair to educate the community about local recreational resources and services available to children and adults with limited abilities.

programs in cultural opportunities for artists, children and adults with disabilities.

Members of the American Wheelchair Bowling Association and the Tampa Bay Strong Dogs wheelchair basketball teams also participated.

The Rehabilitation Center plans to sponsor its second fair next year, Nita said. [EM](#)

## Finding Self-Expression Through Art

Rehabilitation Center patient Sally Baker carefully selected sand, feathers, colored glass pebbles, and shells to craft a miniature representation of a beach – in a jar.

"The beach is one of my favorite places. When I was a kid we'd go to the Jersey Shore," she said while arranging the elements to make her creation, "Peace at the Beach."

Sally and about 10 other Rehabilitation Center patients were participating



Patients created special pieces of art, like the one pictured here, during the class.

in the fourth annual Healing Environment through Art (HeART) program offered by the Rehabilitation Center and the University of Tampa's (UT) Art Therapy program. The program allows patients to use art as a form of

therapeutic relaxation and self-expression.

After listening to the poem "Like Butterflies," they used mixed media elements to fill clear jars to represent the theme "Catch a Happy Thought." They made one for themselves, and another for a permanent display in the Rehabilitation Center.

"We have many patients who have difficulty expressing themselves through language and physically managing tasks," explained Seema Eichler Weinstein Ph.D., manager of Psychology Services. This class gives them a sense of self expression and a sense of ability, she said.

Thirteen UT students assisted patients as they created their pieces of art. Student Dante Benvenuto helped Sally layer her items in the jar and suggested they add a sun, which they crafted together out of yellow paper.

Fern Goulete naturally gravitated



Rehabilitation Center patient Sally Baker and University of Tampa art therapy student Dante Benvenuto craft a beach landscape in a jar during a Healing Environment through Art (HeART) program.

toward what she likes best – butterflies and dragonflies – as she made her special piece, "Butterfly Waiting to be Free."

"There's only one butterfly in here," she said. "It represents me waiting to be free of pain." [EM](#)

# Do You Know The Symptoms Of A Concussion?

It only takes a simple blow or jolt to the head or body to cause a concussion.

A concussion is a mild traumatic brain injury that causes the brain to shake. It affects the function of the brain – not its structure.

It's a common injury among babies and children. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 472,947 infants and children, up to the age of 14, visit hospital emergency rooms with traumatic brain injuries each year.

Tampa General Hospital clinical neuropsychologist Jennifer McCain, Psy.D., says it's important for parents to recognize the

symptoms of concussions and know how to treat them.

Concussions are temporary and post-concussion symptoms typically last for days to weeks, and generally resolve within a month. They can occur even if a child does not lose consciousness, she said. It's important to see a healthcare provider, such as a neuropsychologist, who is knowledgeable about concussions if your child's symptoms do not improve or get worse.

Some symptoms may appear immediately after an injury and other symptoms may show up several days later. Symptoms may last days, weeks, or months. Symptoms may also get worse if a child is physically active or is doing activities that require concentration, Jennifer said.

## Common Concussion Symptoms

Thinking/Remembering	Physical	Emotional/Mood	Sleep
Difficulty thinking clearly	Headache Fuzzy or blurry vision	Irritability	Sleeping more than usual
Difficulty processing new information	Nausea or vomiting (early on) Dizziness	Sadness	Sleeping less than usual
Difficulty concentrating	Sensitivity to noise or light	More emotional	Trouble falling asleep
Difficulty remembering new information	Feeling tired, having no energy Balance problems	Nervousness or anxiety	

Children with chronic migraine headaches, learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder (ADD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), visual disorders, and emotional and mental health conditions may exhibit more severe and longer lasting symptoms.

The initial treatment for a concussion is mental and physical rest which allows the brain to heal. Children who do the best gradually return to activities, Jennifer said. Those with serious symptoms should avoid activities that exert their brains or bodies, like sports, school work, playing video games, or texting. Even though initial physical and cognitive activities are important for recovery, it's also important to gradually introduce children to activities as long as they can participate without the return of symptoms.

With guidance from the appropriate health care professional, children can slowly return to mental and physical activities as they begin to feel better, Jennifer said.

### Call 911 if your child has these symptoms:

- Seizures
- Weakness or tingling in the arms or legs
- Is unable to recognize people or places
- Is confused, restless, or agitated
- Impaired consciousness
- Is difficult to arouse or unable to awaken
- Repeated vomiting
- Slurred speech
- Bloody or clear fluid coming from the nose or ears



## Wheelchair Rugby Players Compete In International Tournament

Wheelchair rugby teams from Germany, Brazil, Alabama, Missouri, Arizona, Georgia – as well as Tampa General Hospital-sponsored the Tampa Generals – competed in the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Tampa International Wheelchair Rugby Tournament earlier this year.

Some of the Tampa Generals team players are former Tampa General rehabilitation patients.

The sport benefits players, said co-captain Justin Stark, director of the Florida Spinal Cord Injury Resource Center, which is located in the Rehabilitation Center. "You're out there competing and training and you get better physically," he said.

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## About Tampa General Hospital Rehabilitation Services

Rehabilitation Services at Tampa General Hospital are accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) for the following adult and pediatric programs:

- Comprehensive Integrated Inpatient Rehabilitation
- Outpatient Interdisciplinary Chronic Pain and Headache Management Rehabilitation
- Inpatient and Outpatient Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation
- Inpatient and Outpatient Brain Injury Rehabilitation
- Inpatient Stroke Rehabilitation



Rehabilitation Services is also designated by the Florida Department of Health as a provider of services to both adult and pediatric Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Program (BSCIP) patients. Our services are accredited by The Joint Commission, and TGH is proud to be a Magnet hospital.

In addition to inpatient programs, Rehabilitation Services' continuum of care includes services provided by hospital-based rehabilitation therapists and physician services for new and follow-up patients in the Rehabilitation Medical Clinics.



### REHABILITATION CENTER

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