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POINTS LIVING

An Exclusive Newsletter for the Residents of The Points Communities • August 2021

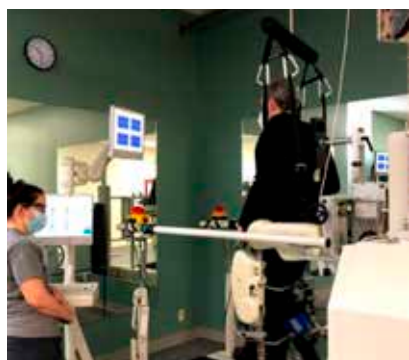


THE TRUE VALUE OF COMMUNITY
Meet The Oh Family

Cover photo by Jennifer Winter

PUSHING

B O U N D A R I E S



The Lokomat® robotic gait training system can be used by clients of almost any function level and can be uniquely programmed for each client to provide maximum therapeutic benefit.

Increasing Function and Maximizing Independence

Submitted by **Michael LaTour**, Associate Director of Pushing Boundaries

Paralysis is a life-altering word. Most often, people associate it with paraplegia or quadriplegia resulting from a spinal cord injury. But stroke, traumatic brain injury, multiple sclerosis, and a myriad of other conditions can result in varying levels of paralysis. For some, loss of function can be permanent, while for others, it means having to train the body to work differently. Regardless of prognosis, building strength and learning new ways to navigate the world are key factors in maximizing independence.

Pushing Boundaries, a Redmond-based nonprofit, works to support people on their rehabilitative journey. Founded in 2005 by Allan and Sharon Northrup (after a motor-vehicle collision left Allan paralyzed), Pushing Boundaries' mission is to provide intensive exercise therapy that strengthens and supports people living with paralysis, and their families, to maximize health and improve quality of life.

“Our approach is two-pronged,” says Pushing Boundaries Associate Director Michael LaTour. “First, we support those navigating paralysis in maximizing their potential physical function and independence. Some clients use our exercise therapy programs to regain function and strength, while others focus on maintenance and/or arresting degeneration.” Specially trained therapists work one-on-one with clients; they pair traditional gym equipment with a large selection of specialized tools, including electrical stimulation bikes, a robotic hand trainer, vibration plates, and the only Lokomat® robotic exoskeleton system in Western Washington.



The exercise therapy team all have bachelor's degrees in exercise science or kinesiology. In addition to more standard exercise therapy certifications, they are all also certified inclusive fitness instructors.



Sebastian and ET Kevin come up with some creative strength-building.



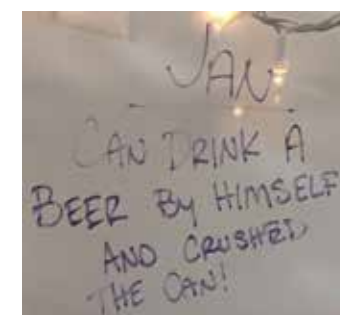
The Lokomat® robotic gait training system can be used by clients of almost any function level and can be uniquely programmed for each client to provide maximum therapeutic benefit.

“In addition,” LaTour continues, “we provide an online resource center that anyone can use, whether they come for exercise therapy or not.” A catastrophic event or diagnosis is life-altering ... and overwhelming. “When Sharon and Allan originally started Pushing Boundaries, they wanted to ease some of the strain the family and support system feels,” LaTour adds. This resource center includes everything from recreation options to transportation resources to contractors who specialize in adaptable conversions for homes.

Playful and Fun, Despite COVID

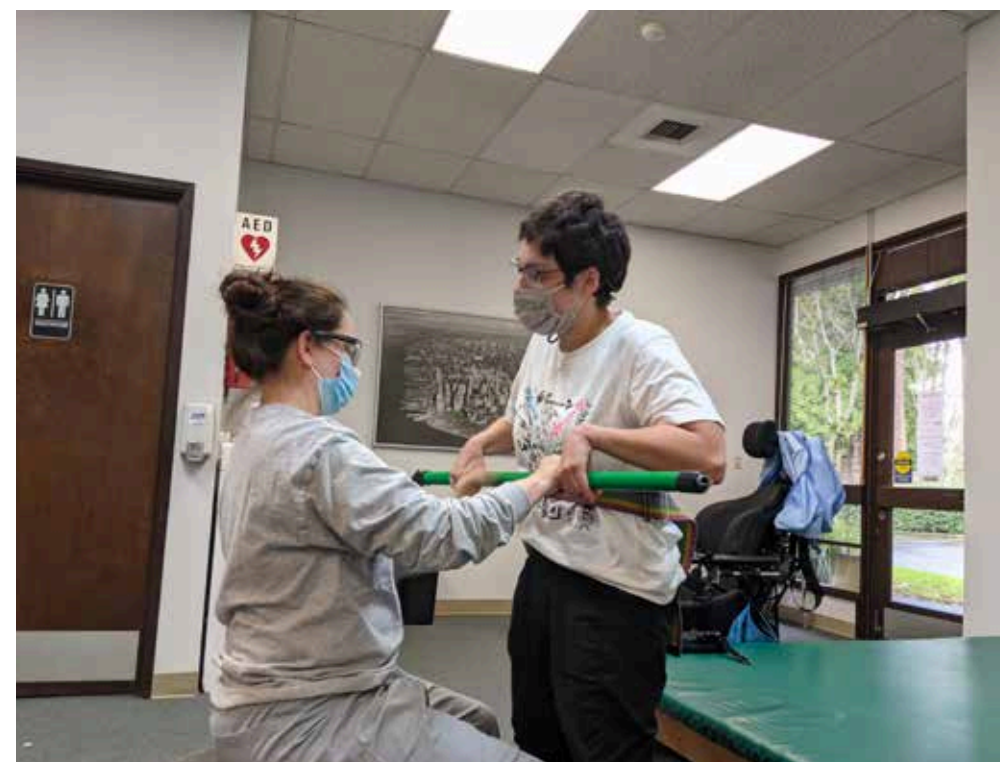
Because Pushing Boundaries cannot direct-bill insurance for exercise therapy, the therapists are able to work in conjunction with more traditional healthcare, without being embedded in it. Consequently, clients often feel a strong sense of autonomy and control over their goals and progress. Milestones such as “playing wheelchair rugby” and “drinking a beer without help” exemplify both the freedom and playfulness found onsite. The therapists also mix recovery with fun. On one day, the facility may be turned into a real-life “Minecraft” game (complete with theme music) for a 13-year-old client, while another day, races between clients are being held in the parking lot, or the “Twister” mat is being used for stretching exercises. It is not unusual for a therapist to start a session with the robotic exoskeleton [TMI], and end the same session with a “good, old-fashioned game of keep-away.”

That said, being outside the traditional model does come with challenges. For many clients, one such challenge is the cost of therapy. To keep rates as affordable as possible, Pushing Boundaries fundraises to subsidize the cost of providing services. Executive Director Teri Mayo, LMT, states: “In an ideal world, every year we’d be able to lower our prices so more



The facility “milestone” wall highlights clients’ progress.

and more people can access our services.” As with many businesses during COVID-19, the cost of doing business has risen. “Especially now, we are relying on community support just to keep rates stable. If we can do that, we consider it a win.” She reports that



Strength and coordination exercises can increase dexterity and movement.

fundraising currently needs to cover 35% of the cost of providing services.

“COVID-19 has been a significant challenge,” says Mayo, “but after a five-month closure, a whole batch of new procedures, limiting access, and other challenges, we are still here. And we must be. There is nothing else like us in the region. We are so grateful to the community as it steps up and helps us continue our mission.”

“If you or a family member may benefit from Pushing Boundaries’ exercise therapy programs, please give us a call or go to the website to tell us more about you.”

Website: www.pushing-boundaries.org

Resources for Home Adaptability:

www.pushing-boundaries.org/equipment-housing-adaptability

Potential New Clients: www.pushing-boundaries.org/let-s-talk

Donations: www.pushing-boundaries.org/donating

Facebook: www.facebook.com/PushingBoundariesWA

Instagram: www.instagram.com/pushingboundarieswa

YouTube www.youtube.com/user/PushingBoundaries

Twitter: www.twitter.com/Push_Boundaries

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