

VOLUNTEER news

A newsletter for Shepherd Center Auxiliary & Volunteers



Volunteer Highlight - Molly Lanier

Molly Lanier's relationship with Shepherd Center is deep and multi-faceted, including decades of service and support of our mission.

Molly was born right next door to Shepherd at Piedmont Hospital. Every day, as she passed the Center on her way to school, she saw active patients outside. Her father was CEO of National Data Corporation, her mother was a stay-at-home mom, and both set strong examples of faith, community service, and helping others which left a lasting impression on Molly.

Growing up in Brookwood Hills, she enjoyed reading, swimming, and playing tennis. Even as a child, Molly found opportunities to serve through church and school. She graduated from UGA with a degree in history and got a job in marketing at IBM. She made her first connection with Shepherd by becoming an active member of the Junior Committee and volunteering to feed patients. She chaired the Junior Committee's annual fundraiser, Derby Day, and thoroughly enjoyed helping advance the Shepherd mission.

After Molly and her husband started their family, she became a founding member of Peach Corps — a group of volunteers with young families who planned and executed fun activities for patients and families, such as cookouts in the Anna and Hays Mershon Secret Garden, ice cream socials, and other events that allowed children to serve right along with their parents. Molly has fond memories of her young son and daughter accompanying her, not only to those events but also to meetings and other Shepherd activities over the years.

Molly has also been very active in our auxiliary, leading shifts of volunteers in the annual fundraiser they ran at the time, Pecans on Peachtree. Through the years, she has served on our Advisory Board and Foundation Board and was asked to serve on our Board of



Directors. Just as she accepted a role on the Board, the unexpected happened — her son Tommy, then 19, was diagnosed with cancer and later came to Shepherd as a patient in our Brain Injury Rehabilitation Program. The many months Molly spent by Tommy's side at Shepherd Center gave her a valuable new perspective on the organization. Molly still serves on the Board of Directors and its Quality Committee and uses her experience as the mother of a patient to contribute to discussions, planning, and decisions about Shepherd's future.

This year, as volunteers were invited back to serve after the peak of the pandemic, Molly returned to a role she had filled on and off through different stages in her life — delivering mail to patients' rooms.

"It's the best volunteer job I've had at Shepherd because it's such a pleasure to see smiles on the faces of the patients and their family members! They are so tired after their therapy, and it's uplifting to them to receive something," Molly says.

She also loves seeing how the patients decorate the walls of their hospital rooms with the cards they receive, knowing it brightens their days. Molly added two other facets of family support services to her volunteerism, visiting newly admitted families to orient them to family services available to them, and driving the family members of patients on short errands.

Molly says one thing has become clear to her through the many ways she has engaged with Shepherd.

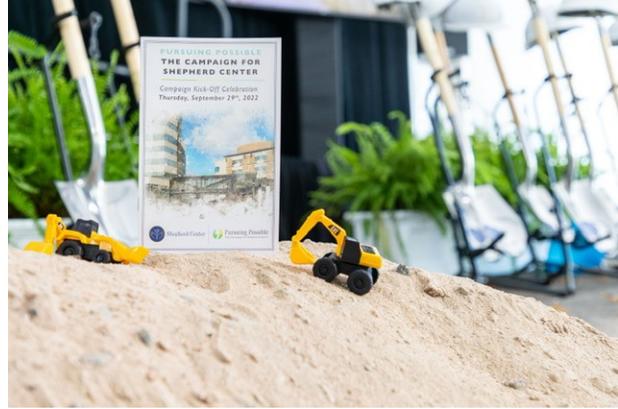
"From the environmental services workers that cleaned my son's hospital room to the members of the boards and everyone in between, each person cares. Shepherd Center is like a big family!"

Whether serving on the board, delivering mail, or driving and visiting our patients and families, Molly's compassion is evident as she nurtures everyone she meets. We are very grateful she is a part of the big Shepherd family!

Campaign Corner



On Thursday, September 29, friends, family, staff, volunteers, and community members all gathered to celebrate the official public launch of the Pursuing Possible campaign. Together we unveiled the plans for the new Marcus Center for Advanced Rehabilitation and the new Arthur M. Blank Family Residences. We are so thankful to all of our volunteers for your tremendous support throughout our journey to reach this significant milestone.



Motherhood and Spinal Cord Injury



Chelsea Vietti always had two goals: to dance and to become a mom. After a spinal cord injury at the age of 22, it seemed like those goals were impossible. During her 3.5-month stay with us at Shepherd Center, she developed close relationships with her care team, who helped her see things from a different perspective.

“They encouraged me that no matter what I wanted to do, there would be a way to do it. It just may be different,” she said.

Three months ago, Chelsea and her husband welcomed a beautiful daughter, Dorothy, affectionately called Dottie, into the world. Chelsea's determination and optimism helped her create the life she loves as she develops adaptive ways to provide care for Dottie while running a dance studio with her husband.

“My biggest piece of advice is to stay driven,” she said. “It’s a huge adjustment and I have to find different ways to connect with her to show her I’m mom, but I can honestly say now I have everything I’ve ever dreamed of.”

For more resources and practical insights from women with spinal cord injuries, [visit](#) our YouTube series!

Full Circle: Former Patient Pursues Career in Psychiatry

When DéShon Haughton decided to pursue medical

school, he was challenged with choosing a concentration that combines his passion for exercise and his love for people. That's when his research led him to physical medicine and rehabilitation (PM&R), also known as physiatry.



Life took a turn when DéShon found himself learning about physiatry from the patient side. Shortly after medical school graduation in December 2020, he sustained a spinal cord and brain injury after an automobile crash, leading him to [Shepherd Center](#) under the care of Anna Choo Elmers, M.D. After months of an intensive rehabilitation regimen, DéShon was able to walk out of Shepherd Center with a new perspective and new relationships.

Now DéShon had another hurdle to face: getting back on track with his education and securing a residency for his chosen concentration.

“To get back on track after months of rehabilitation is a big challenge,” Dr. Elmers said.

True to form, DéShon undertook this challenge with optimism and determination. He reached out to Dr. Elmers to ask for her mentorship and an opportunity to shadow her, adding to his medical experience. Dr. Elmers wholeheartedly agreed.

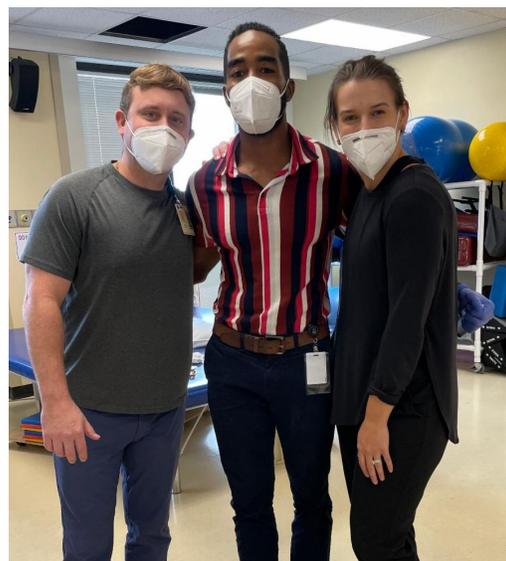
“It’s beneficial for Shon but for our team as well,” Dr. Elmers said. “We were so excited to see him. This is really a story of ‘returning home.’”

So, during the week of August 22, 2022, DéShon visited Shepherd Center again, this time as a student learning from the team that cared for him.

“It’s revitalizing,” he explained. “It’s very important to me, not only to interact with Dr. Elmers and the therapists, but it also gives me the motivation to continue pursuing this field. I’ve really loved this opportunity to learn from them all.”

DéShon is currently taking part in a preliminary internship in internal medicine and applying for a physiatry residency in 2023. He is hoping to take what he’s learned from his experience as a patient and from his time with Dr. Elmers to help others going through the rehabilitation process.

“When I had my injury and became a patient, it gave me two different perspectives,” DéShon said. “Being a part of other patients’ rehabilitation and being able to influence them in some way, getting them back to what they want to do is amazing. That’s what Shepherd is all about, and I would love to be a part of that.”



ShepherdCares 2023: Another Successful Employee Giving Campaign



Each September, Shepherd Center employees support a need within the hospital by contributing to the ShepherdCares Employee Giving Initiative. This year's campaign, "VIP Access," supported efforts to increase Patient Access at Shepherd Center. This includes expansion efforts and new systems that are part of the Pursuing Possible campaign. These chances mean there will be an appropriate bed available when needed so we don't have to turn patients away, or appointment openings in our clinics for those who need outpatient

treatment with us. These critical changes will empower our patients and make accessing care more seamless.

Honorary chairs Katherine Creek, John McDaniel, Dr. Jacqueline Rosenthal, and Jo Tapper, challenged employees to raise \$175,000 towards this worthy cause. Seventy staff ambassadors across the hospital worked hard to encourage their co-workers to participate in the campaign. Kickoff events were held for staff at 80 Peachtree Park, Pathways, and all shifts at the main campus. Enthusiastic ambassadors handed out box lunches and encouraged their employees to get in on the fun.

Per usual, Shepherd Center employees rose to the challenge. We exceeded our goals, achieving 75% participation and pledging a staggering \$248,885 in just five short weeks, exceeding the goal by 42% - a record high amount. We are grateful to our generous employees across every department who helped support our patients in this meaningful way. Thank you Shepherd Center!

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