

# VOLUNTEER *news*

A newsletter for Shepherd Center Auxiliary & Volunteers



## Volunteer Highlight - Ellen Campbell

The story of our volunteer Ellen Campbell is that of a humble, focused, and dedicated individual who has always looked for opportunities to be physically active, educate herself, and help others. Ellen is one of six children. She and her siblings were raised to value faith, church, education, and service. Growing up, Ellen loved having five siblings to play with. They spent lots of time outdoors, playing kickball, softball, and cycling in their neighborhood or swimming, boating, and water skiing at Lake Hartwell. At the age of 15, she received her first puppy as a Christmas present, and the joy she experienced with “Chrissy” would later influence one of her choices for volunteering.



Ellen loves learning and completed her undergrad degree in health and physical education at the University of Georgia, where she was also on the gymnastics team. She earned her master’s degree at Emory University and completed a Ph.D. in physical education for students with disabilities at the University of New Mexico. She devoted her tireless energy and advanced education to a career in teaching students with disabilities in elementary school, middle school, and college. She retired just a few years ago after 39 years in education but still delights in volunteering!

Several years ago, while teaching, Ellen saw what service dogs could do for people with disabilities, and she wanted to get involved. When she moved to a house with a fenced yard, she signed up to be a volunteer “raiser” for Southeastern Guide Dogs. In this role, she completed training to care for a puppy for a year. The puppy was bred to be a service dog, and Ellen’s role, beginning when the puppy was eight weeks old, was to provide socialization and teach basic obedience based on the organization’s guidelines. At the end of the year, the dog was transferred to the organization’s training facility for 6 – 9 months

of additional training, then matched with someone in need of the dog. This role suited Ellen well, as she loved bringing each puppy she raised to school with her as she taught. She is currently raising her fifteenth puppy! The first eight puppies became guide dogs, and the last seven came from Canine Companions, the organization that has provided the facility dogs at Shepherd Center. No matter which organization her puppies have come from, Ellen says, “the dogs are uplifting spirits to everyone they interact with!”

More than 10 years ago, Ellen heard about The Atlanta Journal-Constitution Peachtree Road Race’s wheelchair division hosted by Shepherd Center, and she became a volunteer timer. She always had her current furry sidekick with her as she clocked the competitors flying over the finish line. Later, Ellen expanded her service at Shepherd Center. Her long volunteer career with us has included feeding breakfast to patients with quadriplegia, assisting with locomotor training, and helping with administrative work. Currently, she assists with yoga classes for patients. In some volunteer roles, she was able to bring her facility dog-in-training with her, to the delight of us all.

Katie Kimball, MS, OTR, the occupational therapist who leads Shepherd’s yoga class, shares, “Ellen has been just the spark that the yoga class needed! She is so incredibly timely and hardworking. Ellen sees a need and takes initiative without guidance, making everything run a little more smoothly. She seamlessly fits into the culture, encouraging patients during the class and actively participating herself. We are so grateful to have someone who supports the Shepherd culture and helps make a difference in both the therapist and patient experience!”

We could not agree more with Katie. Across all of her volunteer roles, Ellen has been a perfect fit for the Shepherd culture, bringing her intelligence, her work ethic, and her decades of experience teaching people with disabilities to every opportunity to serve. We are very glad that she chooses not only to raise assistance dogs year after year, but also to invest her time and talent in Shepherd Center blessing so many along the way!

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### Bring Us Your Books!



Volunteer Services is accepting donations for the book cart! Donated books provide entertainment for many, including those waiting for an appointment, inpatients and their caregivers/family members, and even our staff. We accept current, popular fiction and non-fiction, both hardcover and paperback. If you happen to have more than 2 boxes of books, let us know so we can ensure we have space to store them. We’re happy to meet you in the front circle with a cart – just give us a call at 404-350-7315 and we’ll coordinate a time for you to drop them off.



**Pursuing Possible**  
The Campaign for Shepherd Center

[Check out this video](#) of the construction progress at 1860 Peachtree Road, the future home of the Arthur M. Blank Family Residences.

Site preparation will soon be underway for the Marcus Center for Advanced Rehabilitation right here on Shepherd Center’s main campus. Stay tuned for details!

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## NEW Group Volunteer Opportunity!

Do you have the gifts of cooking and hospitality paired with a desire to serve others? Would you enjoy applying those gifts to benefit Shepherd inpatients and their family members? Whether you are just an individual with that interest or would like to involve a club or organization, Shepherd has a wonderful opportunity to offer!



We are excited that the Shepherd Foundation is organizing family dinners twice a month to be held starting early in 2023 and volunteers are needed!

The intention is to bring together a group of volunteers that will not only provide a home-cooked meal for a gathering of inpatients and their family members to enjoy together in their therapy gym but will also enjoy eating and interacting with those attending. In the past we have seen similar dinners create a warm family atmosphere that is conducive to creating community and mutual support for those that attend.

Since the volunteers from each of the dinners planned will not be coming to serve at Shepherd regularly, they will not be required to complete the steps towards becoming a regular in-hospital volunteer. Instead, if you are interested in becoming a volunteer to help prepare for and attend these family dinners, you need only to reach out to [Jennifer Heffron](#), Foundation Engagement Coordinator. She will gladly answer questions, share details, and give you guidance on how to plan and execute a successful Shepherd family dinner.

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### Chris Nesbitt, PT, Uses Physical Therapy to Address Chronic Pain



Q: What do you do at Shepherd Center and how long have you been here?

I am a physical therapist in the [Dean Stroud Spine and Pain Institute](#) at [Shepherd Center](#). I work with people who have chronic pain issues limiting their function or negatively affecting their quality of life. I have worked at Shepherd Center since 2004.

Q: What is chronic pain?

The simplest description of chronic pain is pain that continues for more than three months. It can generally be understood as pain that lasts longer than it took for an injury or illness to heal. Sometimes this happens for no obvious reason. Pain is like an alarm system to help protect us, but with chronic pain, the alarm can get too sensitive. During the past 30 years, we have learned that chronic pain can change our nervous systems and how our brains process pain. We strive to be mindful of our words because how we talk about pain can strongly influence a person's understanding of their condition and pain experience.

Q: What do you want people to understand about chronic pain?

Pain is not equal to tissue damage. If the tissues are healed from an injury and the person is still experiencing pain, then there are ways to address it. If a person is experiencing pain, they are experiencing pain, even if you can't see it. The better someone understands how pain works, the better they can manage it. One easy-to-access resource is [www.Retrainpain.org](http://www.Retrainpain.org).

Q: How does physical therapy for chronic pain differ from other forms of physical therapy?

It's all physical therapy! The profession is changing, and more PT programs are including

pain science, which leads to improvements in approaches to pain. As a specialty pain clinic, we sometimes focus more on things that can be difficult to measure. We often see people with neurological conditions that affect how they move. Over time, altered movement patterns can influence orthopedic issues that increase pain with daily activities. A lot of things can influence the pain of someone living with a long-term chronic condition. Some people begin to experience pain with activities that are not normally expected to hurt. That is a sign the pain system has become increasingly sensitive. For some people experiencing chronic pain, we use a series of “brain exercises” called Graded Motor Imagery. It’s a strategy to get the pain alarm system to return to its normal settings.

Q: What is your favorite part of your job?

People living with pain can be frustrated with healthcare experiences because they don’t feel like the doctor or therapist believes or understands them. Patients appreciate someone who will listen to their experience and acknowledge that their experience is real and makes sense. Sometimes we can really help people feel like they got a part of their lives back because we helped them put their pain on the back burner. That’s a nice thing to work for.

Q: How do I schedule an appointment for physical therapy?

We require a referral from a physician, nurse practitioner, or physician’s assistant prior to scheduling. Please contact the New Patient Coordinator at [404-603-4203](tel:404-603-4203) or email at [painreferrals@shepherd.org](mailto:painreferrals@shepherd.org) to provide your referral and to inquire about scheduling an appointment.

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