

VOLUNTEER news

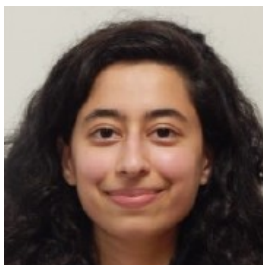
A newsletter for Shepherd Center Auxiliary & Volunteers



March



Volunteer Highlight - Zainab Khawaja



Zainab Khawaja feeds lunch to inpatients with tetraplegia (also known as quadriplegia) every other Wednesday. She is grateful to have the opportunity to volunteer both because she enjoys helping people after their injuries and she values the experience of interacting with patients as she pursues her dream of becoming a medical doctor.

Zainab's family has a rich history that includes immigration to the United States. Her parents were born and raised in Pakistan. Her dad immigrated to the United States first, and then her mother. They married and had three sons before Zainab was born. Their only daughter appreciates that she was raised in a tight-knit family with strong values, including a strong work ethic, perseverance, and hospitality. Growing up, she saw her mother spread love and kindness through food and hospitality, cooking dishes and sharing them with visitors to their home. Every person, from an invited dinner guest to a contractor repairing something in their home, was fed a home-cooked meal and given extras to take home.

Zainab has many happy memories of childhood, including playing viola in the orchestra. At Lakeside High School, she developed a passion for the medical field, and during her senior year, as managing editor of the school newspaper, she sharpened her communication and collaboration skills. From childhood, she has enjoyed the family's annual tradition of watching in person (and/or participating in) The Atlanta Journal-Constitution Peachtree Road Race. Zainab's family gathers on Peachtree to cheer race participants on and then heads to Waffle House for a meal. That tradition, which continues today, brought her in contact with Shepherd Center. As a teen, she became a participant in the Peachtree Road Race rather than an observer. When she passed by Shepherd Center, seeing our patients and staff cheering everyone on opened her eyes to who we are and what we do.

Zainab's passion for medicine has guided her choices for volunteering and work since her teen years. Her first volunteer experience was at the oral surgery clinic at Grady Memorial Hospital. Then, before completing pre-med courses and graduating from the University of Georgia with a degree in psychology, Zainab worked as a research assistant at the Georgia Attitude, Bias, and Behavior Acquisition Lab. This lab at UGA studies how situational cues in our social environments shape attitudes and behavior toward other individuals and groups. Her work there confirmed her interest in a future that may include the field of psychiatry and fueled her desire to be a better person who can bring about meaningful change in the world.

In 2018 she volunteered at Thomasville Medical Center, where she shadowed and assisted in several areas of treatment and rehabilitation, even meeting a patient who had received care at Shepherd. Her knowledge of multiple languages was an asset then and in all her future roles, as she helps and encourages patients who don't speak English. In 2021, she

went to work as a medical scribe, most recently serving in that capacity in an outpatient clinic at Piedmont Hospital. Despite her busy work schedule, she still makes time to volunteer at Clarkston Community Health Center and Shepherd Center!

Zainab was drawn to the role of feeding people with tetraplegia so she could have direct experience with patients. "I like that I make a difference in someone's day," Zainab shares. "It's very rewarding to see firsthand how I can help with something important, and I'm grateful that the patients trust me to do it. While at Shepherd, I build connections with patients and enjoy seeing some of them progress from needing complete assistance to needing less assistance." She has also realized that feeding people ties back to the example her mother has always set, spreading positivity and love through nourishment with food.

During her time in their room, Zainab sometimes gets to use languages she's familiar with, such as Urdu or Spanish, or even learn from a patient a few words in a language new to her. Whether sharing stories about where to find the best cookies at Shepherd or discussing her parents' heritage, Zainab makes the most of her one-on-one time here. She has become even more sure about applying to medical school this spring.

As Zainab lives out her passion and commitment to helping others with an open ear and kind heart, we know we are blessed to have her as a volunteer and that her experiences at Shepherd will help her become an exceptionally compassionate physician one day. We can't wait to see what the future has in store for her!

GIVE THE GIFT OF LIFE!

Shepherd's next Red Cross blood drive is **Thursday, March 9** in the auditorium from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Please make an appointment and give the gift of life!



Scan Here to Make an Appointment



If you have any trouble making an appointment online or have any questions, contact Family Support Services Coordinator Gale Eckstein at gale.eckstein@shepherd.org or 404-367-1351.

Thank you for your support!



Pursuing Possible

The Campaign for Shepherd Center

February 10, 2023, was a very exciting day for campaign construction progress. Jamie Shepherd had the honor of starting the demo of the Sunoco gas station which marks the official beginning of the construction for the new Marcus Center for Advanced Rehabilitation. Acquiring the former Sunoco gas station property, which has access to a traffic light, was an important investment made by Shepherd to ensure our patients, families, and staff could enter and exit safely. [Click here](#) to watch the video of this construction milestone.

Construction Update:

Arthur M. Blank Family Residences

- Deep foundations completed.
- Basement walls complete by end of February.
- Tower crane erected.
- 86% of subcontractors are locked in and 100% will be by end of February.
- Interior unit mockup being constructed.

Marcus Center for Advanced Rehabilitation

- Gas station lease terminated 12/31/22.
- Demolition of station has begun and tank removal starts this week.
- Initial permitting obtained, with more to come.
- Construction contract completed and work set to begin in March.
- Billboard gets to move

Main Campus Renovations

- Conducted initial assessment of space needs.
- Request for Proposal in March for design teams.
- Construction starts after the Marcus Center for Advanced Rehabilitation is complete (mid 2025).

Beyond Therapy Delivers Motivation and Support

“If you all don’t give up on me, I won’t give up on myself.”

That’s what Stephanie Surbaugh Payne told the therapists at Shepherd Center’s [Beyond Therapy®](#) program during her intake interview last August.

Since childhood, Stephanie has been living with mobility, balance, and muscle weakness, which were initially misdiagnosed as muscular dystrophy and largely untreated, leaving her feeling hopeless and defeated.

After experiencing new symptoms in 2019, Stephanie was referred to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, where a team of doctors discovered Stephanie’s symptoms were caused by a rare disease called X-linked myotubular myopathy.

Following her new diagnosis, Stephanie fell twice within 11 months — the second fall shattered her L-1 vertebrae and resulted in a kyphoplasty, a surgical procedure to stabilize her back.

Hoping to regain some independence, Stephanie came to [Shepherd Center](#) in April 2022 for both inpatient and outpatient spinal cord injury rehabilitation. “For the first time in my life, I have found a team of people who believe in me,” Stephanie says. “And that has motivated me not to give up on myself.”

While at Shepherd Center, she learned compensatory strategies to offset her balance issues and worked on gaining muscle strength and endurance. As she progressed, she practiced transitioning from sitting to standing as well as balancing for short periods of time. Although she continued to improve, she wasn’t where she wanted to be. Before her falls, she could walk around her house independently and outside with the help of walking sticks. She hoped to get back to that point.

That’s why she chose to continue her rehabilitation in Shepherd Center’s Beyond Therapy® program, a rigorous activity-based program that combines physical therapy and exercise physiology.

“When it comes to exercise, I’m a quitter,” Stephanie admits. “I need someone to believe in me and motivate me. And that’s exactly what the team at Beyond Therapy does.”

Since August 2022, Stephanie has progressed from standing to walking short distances on a treadmill without holding the rails to, most recently, walking five laps around the gym’s basketball court without mobility aids.

Now Stephanie – who also owns a math tutoring business – has expanded her goals beyond walking independently around her house. She wants to be able to stand in the kitchen long enough to cook dinner, walk the dog with her husband, and go shopping by herself.

She admits that Beyond Therapy is “incredibly intense,” and it is a financial commitment since the program is not covered by insurance, but she believes it is the key to achieving her goals.



"I always look forward to going," says Stephanie, who attends Beyond Therapy twice a week for two hours each day. "It's a real community. The therapists are creative and innovative, and they have taken the time and the care to get to know me and my body to help me the best way they can. I have never had that level of dedication. It's so motivating."

Unique Volunteer Opportunity!



Do you have the gifts of cooking and hospitality paired with a desire to serve others? Whether you are just an individual with that interest or would like to involve a club or organization, Shepherd has a wonderful opportunity for you.

The Shepherd Foundation is now organizing family dinners for patients and their family members held twice a month and volunteers are needed. The team of volunteers for each dinner will provide a home-cooked meal for a gathering of inpatients and their family members to enjoy in a therapy gym. The team will not only serve the group but also enjoy eating and interacting with those attending. Your efforts will create the atmosphere of a family meal with encouragement and 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, these volunteers 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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