second chance
good samaritan foundation donors give paralyzed man hope

Juan Carlos Rubio was working on a dairy farm in October 2016 when a 1,200-pound hay bale fell on top of him, crushing his spinal cord and leaving him paralyzed from the waist down.

But he's walking again, thanks to the Indego Exoskeleton, a battery-powered device strapped to his legs that helps move him forward, step-by-step.

The Good Samaritan Foundation purchased an Exoskeleton for Legacy Good Samaritan Medical Center’s Outpatient Rehabilitation Services unit.

A half-dozen patients now use the device. By helping them stand up and walk, the Exoskeleton aids circulation, respiration, bone density and bowel and bladder function.

It also provides an emotional lift, helping patients out of their wheelchairs, giving them a new perspective on the world around them.

“It gets you back up eye-to-eye with people,” says Kila Mitchell, a physical therapist at Legacy Good Samaritan who works with Rubio and other patients.

The Indego Exoskeleton includes braces for each leg that provide powered assistance at the hips and knees, as well as a battery pack that fits at the lower back. With a walker or crutches to provide stability, patients lean forward to walk and stand upright to stop.

For some patients, the support of the Exoskeleton is enough to get them up and moving until they graduate to a walker or crutches. For others, like Rubio, insurance may help cover the cost of a personal unit.

“Patients love using it,” Mitchell says. “It’s a wonderful tool and we’re so grateful we can offer it.”

– Kila Mitchell, a physical therapist at Legacy Good Samaritan Medical Center
**Donor Spotlight: Salmon Creek**

When the KMR Group Foundation pledged $250,000 to help expand the Legacy Children’s Center – Salmon Creek, Kate Jones considered it an investment in the pediatric rehabilitation patients who use it, as well as their families.

The therapy facility is located at Legacy Salmon Creek Medical Center in Vancouver and provides physical, occupational, and speech therapy for up to 650 children each week. The expansion has provided space for additional staff, equipment, and more patients. In the two years since the facility was expanded, the center has treated an additional 200 children each week and provided support for hundreds of families.

“Parents can go home, feeling their child is getting the care they need,” said Jones, co-founder of the KMR Group Foundation.

Jones says seeing the results at the pediatric rehabilitation center is especially uplifting. “If you go there and see the kids and their parents,” she says, “it brings a tear to your eyes.”

The KMR Group Foundation has also funded Legacy Salmon Creek’s Child Abuse Assessment Team, nursing scholarships, and cancer services.

**Randall Children’s Hospital: Endless Needs for Pediatric Rehabilitation**

At Randall Children’s Hospital at Legacy Emanuel, the equipment needs for pediatric rehabilitation are seemingly endless: wheelchairs, bicycle helmets, tricycles, exercise mats, walkers. It goes on and on.

Thanks to generous donors, the patient equipment fund helps pay for the purchase of custom items not covered by insurance, leaving families to pay only 10 percent of the cost. Often, the family returns the equipment when it’s no longer needed, so another family can use it as well.

In addition to aiding patients and their families, the equipment purchased helps rehab specialists plan and implement new therapies.

“The impact is huge,” says Tonya Rogers, rehabilitation manager at Randall Children’s Hospital at Legacy Emanuel.

**A Scholarship Aids a Pulmonary Rehab Patient’s Recovery**

Before Lee Richey enrolled in the pulmonary rehabilitation program at Legacy Meridian Park Medical Center, he was overweight, lethargic, and had unhealthy eating habits.

Now Richey works out twice a week. He’s changed his diet, started lifting weights and spends a half-hour on a treadmill and 20 minutes on an exercise bike each time he visits the hospital.

He credits a scholarship funded by Meridian Park Medical Foundation donors for helping him afford the small monthly fee for the rehab program.

“I would say that if I didn’t have the opportunity to come here at the reduced fee, I’d be in a gym and I doubt seriously I’d have the results,” Richey says. “I can’t afford a trainer.”

The rehab scholarships are awarded to encourage patients with limited resources to access health and fitness training to aid their recovery from cardiac conditions. Mount Hood Medical Center Foundation is raising funds for a similar program at that hospital.

Richey is a former smoker who retired in 2014 and soon found himself gaining weight and talking to a pulmonologist, who referred him to the cardiac rehab program at Legacy Meridian Park.

Since then, he’s lowered his blood pressure and shed about 20 pounds. In addition to the fitness routine and the nutrition advice, he says the staff holds him accountable, encouraging him to stick with the program.

“It’s really worked out well for me,” he says. “I really feel good.”

**A Healing Space at the Oregon Burn Center**

For patients, the benefits of the healing garden at Legacy Oregon Burn Center are countless: physical therapists bring patients out to improve mobility, aerobic fitness, and their range of motion.

But the shaded garden, designed especially for burn patients, is also a soothing respite from long days spent inside recovering from their wounds.

“It was my first peaceful journey out of the hospital room,” says one patient.

The garden is one of a dozen throughout Legacy Health and includes benches and chairs covered by a broad canopy of trees. There’s also a replica firehouse with tricycles and Portland Fire Bureau helmets and jackets inside.

Some patients with severe burns stay at the center for months. The physical therapists use the garden to reintroduce them to the outside world, with its uneven surfaces, steps and other obstacles that make walking a challenge.

Physical therapist Joe Ableman brings patients into the garden as soon as they’re physically capable, to help prepare them for functional activities that are part of every-day life.

But there is no denying the emotional impact of nature.

“People just want the change of scenery, to see a flower bloom, to see the birds and squirrels that come into the garden,” he says. “Not enough can be said about the allure of fresh air.”

**“It was my first peaceful journey out of the hospital room.”**

– Grateful patient