



# THINK POSSIBLE

*Stories of hope and healing made possible by you.*









**DEAR FRIEND,**

As a valued supporter of Gaylord Specialty Healthcare, you understand the importance of our work to return patients to their lives and loved ones. Your commitment has made a significant impact and we are tremendously grateful for your continued belief in us.

In the following pages, you'll find stories of some of the men and women who relied on Gaylord's expertise after serious illness or injury brought their lives to a grinding halt. Jillian, Sean, Anthony A., Anthony S. and Marianne are the direct beneficiaries of estate gifts from those whose forward-thinking benevolence years ago planted the seeds for the high-caliber care we provide today.

An estate gift signals a strong belief in our mission and a desire for Gaylord to remain a top-notch resource for your children, grandchildren, friends and neighbors should they ever find themselves in need of our life-restoring care.

Estate gifts make a lasting impact, ensuring that future patients overcome their obstacles and reclaim their lives with maximum function and independence. I invite you to join us as we build on our legacy of compassion and healing. Thank you!

Appreciatively,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Sonja A. LaBarbera". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Sonja A. LaBarbera, MSOL, MS CCC/SLP**  
President & CEO

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# JILLIAN HARPIN

*“I’m not going to let my  
disability stop me.”*





Twenty-three-year-old Jillian Harpin was vacationing in Mexico when she slipped off a third-floor balcony, becoming permanently paralyzed.

As a Gaylord inpatient, she learned to adjust to her new reality and credits her physical therapist, Tim, for pushing her farther than she thought she could go. As an outpatient, Jillian benefited both physically and mentally from the Ekso Bionics wearable exoskeleton that enabled her to stand and walk once more.

Jillian immersed herself in the Gaylord Sports Association, excelling at adaptive rock climbing, hand cycling, archery, and CrossFit. Her “Think Possible” spirit was featured in People Magazine and on international television for her role as a Featured Adaptive Athlete in the Gaylord Gauntlet 5k Obstacle Race. Her father, Bill, even became a Gaylord employee after witnessing first-hand the incredible care and support that her team gave to his daughter and his family.

Today, Jillian is living her best life. She recently moved to Denver, Colorado where she met and married the love of her life. Although she’s been busy focusing on her career as a finance manager, she still finds time to ski and mountain bike.

“I’m happier than I’ve ever been before!” she claims.

# SEAN WALSH

*Therapy ... with a dose  
of self-confidence.*







The complex stroke that CCSU professor Sean Walsh suffered in his sleep was so severe that no one knew if the father of two young girls would ever regain cognitive function - or his independence - again.

For five months the 43-year-old worked on his balance, speech and short-term memory before transferring across campus to Gaylord's Traurig House, the state's only residential living center for patients with brain injury or stroke.

Knowing Sean's goal was to return to the classroom in the coming semester, speech pathologist Barbara incorporated real-world tasks - like revising his syllabi - into his therapy and dreamed up ways to rebuild his shattered confidence.

Barbara encouraged Sean to arrange a college lecture complete with visuals for Gaylord staff. After weeks of practice and preparation, Sean confidently presented his work to a large audience including the Gaylord CEO. The exercise not only earned him a standing ovation, but also a healthy dose of confidence.

"It was a great place to recover," he recalled, "both physically and mentally."

# ANTHONY ARCHER

*“They had faith in me when I  
didn’t have faith in myself!”*





Anthony Archer came to Gaylord nearly two months after developing Guillain-Barre Syndrome, a condition in which the immune system attacks the body's nerves. The fast-moving, progressive paralysis trapped the 35-year-old inside his body and weakened the muscles that controlled his breathing. Anthony was reliant on a ventilator and scared: he had unexpectedly coded twice during respiratory procedures and he lived in constant fear of it happening again.

Anthony arrived at Gaylord for vent weaning. Although he felt comfortable in his surroundings, he was anxious about suffocating and would keep himself awake at night so that he "wouldn't forget to breathe."

"But I began to trust. Working with Melissa, my respiratory therapist, was key. She assured me that we would go at my pace. It gave me a sense of control that I hadn't had before. The first time I did a two-hour wean, Melissa sat with me the entire time."

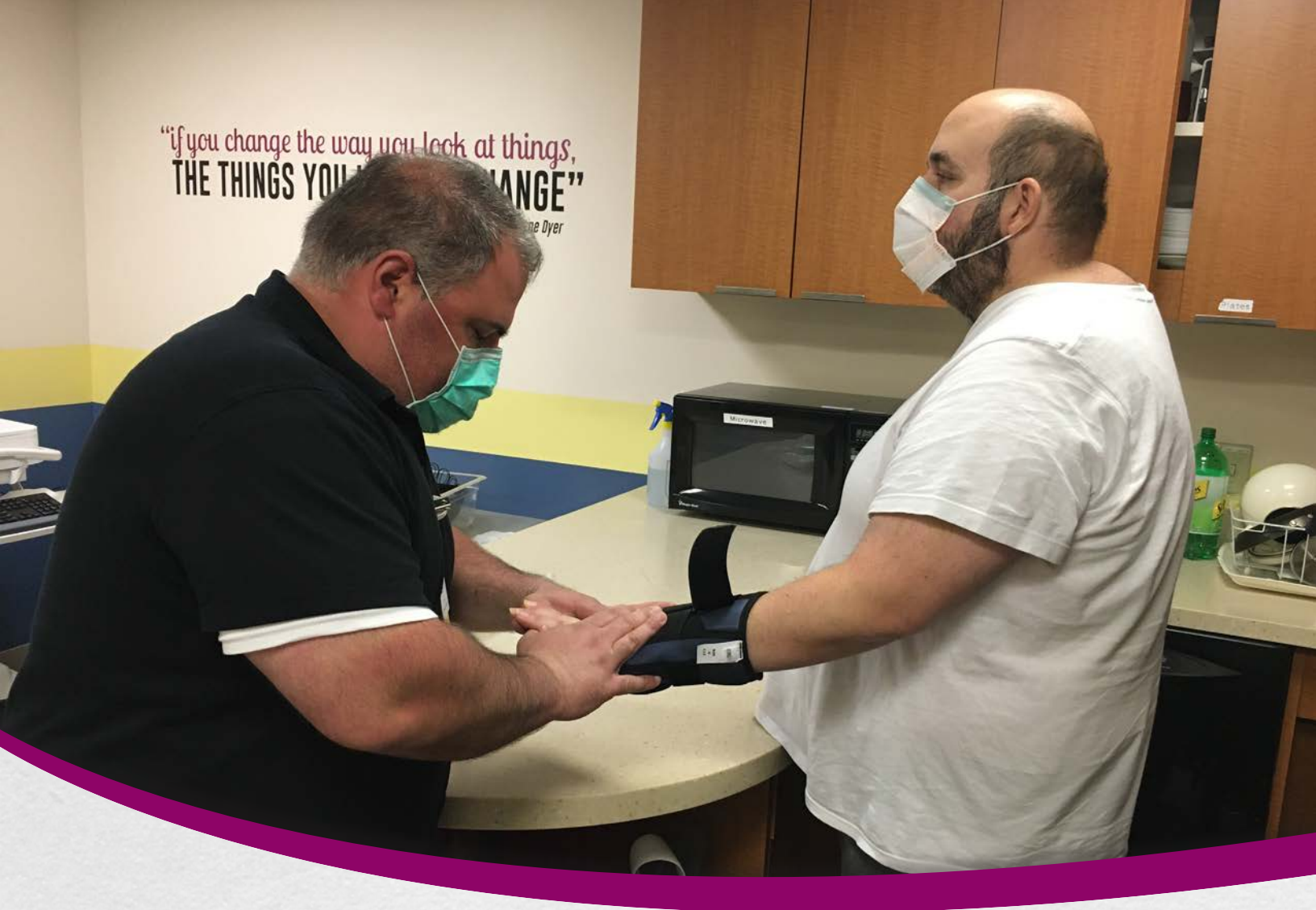
After his successful weaning, speech therapist Rachel helped him regain his ability to swallow and eat, and a team of physical, occupational, and speech therapists worked to get him moving again.

Three weeks after coming off of the ventilator, Anthony walked out of Gaylord unassisted, ready to focus on the next steps in his recovery.

# ANTHONY SPINA

*“Blessed to have  
Gaylord!”*





Anthony Spina was among the first COVID patients in the state to arrive at Gaylord Specialty Healthcare.

The 42-year-old dad of two miraculously survived 17 days on the ventilator, but the virus had wreaked a heavy toll on his body, leaving him too weak to scratch his nose.

Within days of being admitted, Anthony was able to stand and take a few steps. From there, the gains he made came fast and furious, accomplishments he wholly attributes to his care team.

“They treated me like I was the most important person in the world,” he said. “They worked me hard to get home to my wife and my kids and my job.”

“I came into Gaylord, beat up and flat on a gurney ... and I walked out of there like the man that I am.”

# MARIANNE BARBINO DUBUQUE

*“My progress exceeded my most optimistic expectations!”*





Attorney Marianne Barbino Dubuque was diagnosed with a malignant tumor that fractured a bone in her spine. She underwent a series of procedures including radiation and extensive surgery to repair the structural integrity of her spinal cord.

When therapy elsewhere failed to improve her ability to sit, stand and walk, Marianne recalled how aggressive therapy at Gaylord had helped her father after heart surgery. She placed her hopes for renewed independence in Gaylord Physical Therapy in Cheshire.

“My goal was to move beyond a recovering cancer patient and back to a 62-year-old marathoner, cyclist, paddle boarder and skier, even though my oncologist and surgeon were doubtful that I would be able to resume these activities with the rods and screws in my back.”

Her physical therapist, Eric, listened to her concerns and created a strategy to help her walk and safely navigate stairs. Marianne was impressed with Eric’s determination to help her return to her favorite sport: paddle boarding.

“Eric designed an exercise to practice getting into a kneeling position on a board. Recapturing one of my passions has been uplifting and I look forward to more milestones like jogging and skiing in the months ahead!”

# THANK YOU FOR LEAVING A LASTING STATEMENT ABOUT WHO YOU ARE

*and what you care about*

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For more information, please contact:

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