



NEWSLETTER ♦ 62nd Edition ♦ Oct. 2018

OCTOBER IS NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

Held each October, this month is a national campaign that raises disability employment issues and celebrates the many varied contributions of America's workers with disabilities. The theme for 2018 is: ***America's Workforce: Empowering All.***

Note from Belinda: I often am asked by a new amputee, "Am I going to be able to return to my job or to find any type of employment again?" To receive some assistance in answering that important question, I asked several members to respond to a few questions about their experiences in the workplace following limb loss. Along with their answers, which you will find in the SPOTLIGHT column, I also received two articles. I couldn't have been more pleased, because these articles really show the difference between entering the workforce as a person that lost limbs as a child, and a person that lost limbs as an adult who is trying to reenter the workforce. These articles serve to demonstrate what can be accomplished with courage, determination, and a desire to find one's purpose in life. By reading them, you will find that the loss of a limb or limbs doesn't always close the door to employment; instead, it sometimes opens the door to new possibilities.

Closing the Gaps

– by Kelly Reitz

Closing the gaps, with what? People!

The work place is full of uniqueness, from the company itself to the practices, all the way down to its biggest asset... its workforce. How unique is unique? When it comes to the people, the differences are limitless. While this article is not focused on what disabilities a person has as part of their uniqueness, it is a call out to companies to grow their workforce and fill the gap of having people with disabilities in their workforce. Now, there are variations within defining someone with a disability. Some people have a 'disability' but don't consider themselves disabled. They may have always had a disability but never draw attention and, therefore, have never really had it impact their work. There are those who weren't affected by a disability until later in life and so they have to re-learn so many things. There are also people who have always had a disability, but now as they age want to enter the workforce, even if they do receive disability benefits. So why does all of this even matter?

Statistics show that there are not many disabled people in the workforce. How many of these people are *in* the workforce but choose not to 'self-identify' as a disabled worker. What's the point in that? The reason it is becoming more and more talked about is because diversity in the work field is so important these days. You

– Continued on Page 2 Column 1 –

Ten Years of Finding My Purpose

– by Billy Parker

It took me around 10 years to start working again. I lost both arms in a workplace accident in 2007, and in doing so, I had to stop doing what I loved to do. You see, I worked with my hands as a welder/fabricator by trade and did it for over 20 years. Welding was not only work to me; it was a passion, and I was really good at it.

During that 10 years, I was learning to use my prostheses and trying to figure out how to live without arms. I was fortunate enough to have a little savings, and I was also able to draw disability which allowed me to take a break from work. I needed to concentrate on learning how to do everything all over again and to take care of my son Cody. You see I was a single father when I lost my arms. My limb loss affected many people, but none more than Cody. He was 15 at the time and a few months before my accident, Cody's best friend died in his arms in a car wreck. Then about 8 months later, I lost my arms. That's a lot for anyone to deal with, let alone my 15-year-old son. I did whatever I needed to do to make sure that I was there for him. Sure, I lost my arms and I knew it would be a long hard road to get where I needed to be, but Cody had to be my number one priority.

Eventually, I was able to concentrate more on me and got pretty good at doing whatever I wanted or needed to do. It took much practice and patience, and a lot of help and ideas from family and friends. I didn't get to where I am by myself. It took lots of good people, and it still does.

I began feeling pretty eager to get back into the workforce. I really missed welding and decided to teach myself how to weld again; and I did just that. One day a friend called me up and asked if I wanted to help him open a welding shop? You can imagine how excited I was. I was going to weld again, but I soon discovered after a few days that the passion I had for welding was not there anymore. I also found that I had some physical limitations; my arms wouldn't allow me to swing a hammer, and there's a lot of hammer swinging in metal work.

Now, I was really lost. What was I going to do for work? What could I do? I had lost my purpose when it came to my employment. I knew there had to be a reason this happened to me, losing my arms that is. But why? I kept asking myself that question, but I just couldn't figure it out, and that was not a good feeling. I began getting upset with myself because I had made such a big mistake at work and put myself and my family in this position. I knew I had to forgive myself and eventually I did, but still felt lost and wasn't sure what to do about employment. I had lost my 2 most important tools – my hands, or so I thought.

One day my brother David called me up and asked if I would come to his workplace and talk to the guys about my story. He

– Continued on Page 2 Column 2 –

Closing the Gaps (cont'd)

have initiatives to have different generations, race, genders, sexual orientation, military status, etc. But there is still a gap of not hiring people with disabilities! Just because you are missing a limb or use a wheelchair for some reason or other doesn't mean you can't work just as well as anyone else. What about people with unseen disabilities? Is it ok for them to work undercover from anyone knowing they have a disability? Do they not disclose this information for fear of feeling rejected, singled out, or bullied? There are still barriers and tons of myths about people who have disabilities not being good workers. There are still leaders out there that have a bias against those with disabilities; conscious or unconscious, they are there!

How do we get away from this gap? How do we improve in a healthy way that someone with a disability can go to work without fear of someone finding out, interfering with their promotions, or even interfering with time off to go to the doctor for their condition? I am writing this from my own experience and ways I personally think we can all improve our companies AND communities.

I am in my 14th year of working for Humana. When I interviewed with them (as a quadrilateral amputee) I wore long slacks, dressed up as nicely as I could and put on my game face. I was fresh out of college and this was the first time interviewing with such a large company in a professional role. I was a pro at being 'as normal as possible', though with my hands, it was hard to deny I was an amputee. The first thing the lady told me when I came in and sat down was to sit back and take a load off; this was a no pressure interview. I was thankful that I landed my first post-college-it-related-to-my-degree job! Despite my amputated fingers I could type as fast as most people that had fingers, I was a darn good researcher and it helped that I had experience speaking to patients on the phone, not to mention I could speak and read Spanish... all of those came in handy! I began my career with Humana and worked my way up to an auditing department-- this was truly my calling.

Fast forward 7 years, I had a supervisor tell me about an event at Humana called Inclusion and Diversity Day. After a little persuasion from my supervisor, I set up a table for this special event (we just called it I&D Day) and on the table I set out an article my mom wrote about me when I was a kid and I mainly talked about being an amputee (we hadn't begun **Moving Forward** until that June) and Meningococemia (long medical term for Bacterial Meningitis which is what caused my amputations when I was a year old). I began doing this yearly not only in my building but also at our corporate building right down the road. After the second year of doing an I&D Day, I started having other employees come up to me about their disability and wanted to help me with my table and basically share the space/table at the event with them. It started to grow awareness! We even had a group of us try to start a group within Humana focused on disabilities and helping employees to get the accommodations they needed but weren't getting. The group did not move forward due to a small number of people interested. Each year the interest built but still not enough to make an actual group. In spring of 2017 I was given the opportunity to assist with building a Network Resource Group (NRG) for disabilities. We did some planning and discussions and later had openings for leadership roles with the NRG. After some thought and consideration (and a touch of procrastination), I applied for the position of co-chair and was chosen to be one of two co-chairs for the group.

Between being a Vice-President with **Moving Forward** and a co-chair with Humana's Disability NRG, called ACCESS, I am in a unique position to share some of the trends and opportunities I see and that are continually developing as I learn from both a business entity

– Continued on Page 3 Column 1 –

Ten Years of Finding My Purpose (cont'd)

hoped that it would encourage them to begin doing things more safely. I agreed to do it, but didn't know what I was doing, and I was very nervous. I talked for about 10 to 15 minutes, and as I was leaving a man by the name of Doug stopped me and said, "Billy, you could help a lot of people and maybe even keep someone else from getting hurt or killed in the workplace if you would perfect your story a little and practice talking in front of folks."



Come to find out, Doug was about to retire from the safety industry and knew what he was talking about.

I went home and did just that. I began by getting in touch with an old work buddy, and he let me come talk to his employees. I did eight safety presentations for them just to get used to talking to an audience. I was really surprised by all the good feedback and the positive results that my story was having in the safety world. A lot of questions started coming. Was this what I was meant to do now? Is this why I lost my arms the way I did? Is this why I didn't die that day?

I started to do a little marketing just to see what would happen. To my surprise, I had begun a new career just by telling my story. Most importantly, I was helping to keep limbs and lives safe in the workplace. I started getting more and more calls. I hadn't done that much marketing, so how was I getting those jobs? To my surprise, it was all by word of mouth.

I still just wasn't sure if this was what I was meant to do. While seeing and hearing the positive results from my safety presentations; the tears, the laughter, the hugs, and the cheers, that question began to be answered. Folks would come up to me and shake my metal hand, and they would tell me that my story had changed the way they felt about safety and even the way they thought about life. The answer was **yes**. I knew exactly why this had happened. **I was meant to help others.** Wow!

I now have been telling my story to companies and whoever else wants to hear it for almost 2 years. I'm as busy as I've ever been. I love what I'm doing and wouldn't change a thing. You know, earlier I said that I had lost my 2 most important tools, my hands. Well, it turned out that during this whole process of finding my new purpose, both in the workplace and in my life, that I found my most important tool of all, **my heart**.

STAY YOU, STAY POSITIVE, AND BE SAFE!



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## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

One day it just clicks.

You realize what's important and what isn't. You learn to care less about what other people think of you and more about what you think of yourself. You realize how far you've come and you remember when you thought things were such a mess that you would never recover. And you smile. You smile because you are truly proud of yourself and the person you've fought to become.



## Closing the Gaps (cont'd)

and community side of things.

First and foremost, I think it's important to build trust with your employer or soon-to-be employer. Though I started with Humana as not identifying myself as disabled, I have come to realize that I'm doing myself and others an injustice! Just because I do not use any accommodations at this time does not mean I won't ever need them. When I self-identify, I help my employer be recognized as a company that is welcoming of those with disabilities. It also helps build the internal community at Humana. This is powerful because when a company can identify with being diverse, it helps not only the community, but it helps those seeking a job come into a company they can trust instead of how I came in... I started with a company I was not sure would welcome me, so I did my best to blend in. Now I'm in a company that I know I can trust but I'd love to show those affected by disabilities that they can trust too!

More on building the community... right now there aren't many amputees or autistic employees at Humana, but did you know that there are a lot of caregivers that work there too! They don't always speak up at this point, but we're working on that... it goes back to being able to trust! Caregivers need resources as well as the disabled employee, so those resources that are built up in the community and gathered and shared like we do in **Moving Forward** can also be shared and even built up from within Humana and surrounding companies. This is one of the next steps we can take in bridging that disability gap in the workforce.

Lastly, I want to focus on a program that will start to outreach and pull disabled, seen and unseen, into the workforce. There are physical disabilities that can stand out real quick, but what about those that you cannot see? There is a massive increase in unseen disabilities like Autism, ADHD, Dyslexia, Depression, and Anxiety disorders... the list can go for miles! Can we not use those people in the workforce?! Of course we can! In places like Humana there is so much flexibility in the job role, it's almost unreal. There are flex schedules, work at home roles, amenities for the workspace, both in and out of the office. When we start going to job fairs looking for potential employees that HAVE a disability, we will gain trust with an employer before we even gain the job... let that sink in!

All in all, I wanted to share my personal experience in the workforce and how I am using and am continually building on bridging this gap. Even though I have had good experiences in the workforce, there are many who have not had good experiences. I think doing things from within the company to increasing awareness

of different disabilities, increasing education and resources, educating our management on how to handle conscious and unconscious biases about disabilities, and building trust with our current and potential employees are all ways we can improve not only my company, but so many others - big and small! There are a lot of myths and barriers still to break down, but we need to start breaking them down!



Kelly and Billy enjoying a trip to Las Vegas while attending a conference for Humana's Disability Resource Group.

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SPOTLIGHT

— by Belinda

Each month in the SPOTLIGHT column, we shine our light on a member of our group or on a special organization. For the month of October, that light will be cast over several

— Continued on Page 4 Column 1 —



SEPTEMBER RECAP

It was quite a busy month with our participation in *Give for Good Louisville*, along with holding 3 group meetings. Kelly held the quarterly meeting at Harrison Co. Hospital in Corydon, IN, on Sept. 5th. We are having some difficulty getting the attendance up in that meeting, and we are considering discontinuing it if it doesn't pick up. The goal was to reach out to amputees, family members, and care givers in the Harrison and Crawford County areas. We wanted to provide information, resources, and support in those communities. It seems that the main hindrances are getting the word out and transportation issues. If you know of someone in that area who may benefit from attending our meetings, please contact us. If you are a physical or occupational therapist, home health aid, doctor, nurse, or other medical professional who would consider helping us to spread the word, we would be glad to send you some of our brochures. We would love to be able to continue holding this meeting and reaching out to those affected by limb loss in those counties.

On Sept. 13th, **Moving Forward**, along with over 500 other not-for-profits in our area, took part in *Give for Good Louisville*. Please see the special article in this newsletter about our participation in this event.

At the SIRH meeting held on Sept. 17th, an open discussion was held on many topics. We talked about resources for amputees in need of handicapped accessible improvements to their homes, pharmacies in our area that offer home delivery, and what tasks can be provided by a home health aid. Debbie Troutman told the group about the many services that she has received from LifeSpan. Belinda said that in the Louisville area, the Center for Accessible Living helps people with disabilities to connect with needed resources. We also discussed the importance of not allowing pride to get in the way of safety. That even though we may not want to use a mobility aid, such as a cane, walker, or wheelchair, sometimes they are necessary to help to prevent falls or to allow wounds to heal properly.

Our Louisville meeting was held on Sept. 22nd. A special presentation

was given by Leslie Farhat who is a field clinical specialist with Neuros Medical. She was there to inform us of a clinical trial



being done on an implantable device which helps to block both residual and phantom limb pain. She explained how the device works and how it is implanted. This is the 3rd phase of the clinical trial, so if the study goes as they hope, the product would then be on the market pending approval by the FDA. The device company is looking for lower-limb amputees to take part in the study. There is no cost to those taking part in the study and transportation costs are covered. For more information, you can contact Leslie at 440-951-2565 or lfarhat@neurosmedical.com.

Moving Forward does not endorse any particular product, service, or company. We do welcome the opportunity to inform those affected by limb loss of products or services that may prove to be beneficial to them.

Following the presentation, **Moving Forward Limb Loss Support Group, Inc.**, held its *Annual Business Meeting and Election of Officers*. President Belinda Jacobi called the meeting to order. It was decided to hold the election first since some members weren't going to be able to stay for the entire meeting. Secretary Elaine Skaggs conducted the

— Continued on Page 4 Column 2 —

SPOTLIGHT (cont'd)

members of *Moving Forward*. I decided that with this being *National Disability Employment Awareness Month*, it would be a good time to have some of our members share with you a little about their experiences in the workforce. I compiled a list of questions that I commonly hear from amputees who are hoping to get back to work, and then I posed those questions to myself, Kelly Reitz, Billy Parker, Elaine Skaggs, and Mike Portman.

First let me provide you with some background on each of these individuals: Kelly became an amputee as a child due to bacterial meningitis. She is a quadrilateral amputee having lost both legs below-the-knees and parts of both hands. Kelly's perspective will be from someone who has spent almost her entire life with limb loss. Billy became a bilateral upper arm amputee as the result of a workplace accident. He was faced with the challenge of not only learning to live without arms, but he was also a single father. Elaine was in a motorcycle accident which caused her left leg to be amputated above-the-knee. Mike's below-the-knee limb loss of his left leg was due to complications from diabetes. The amputation of my right leg below-the-knee was caused by cancer.

One of the 1st questions that I am always asked is, "How long did it take you to get back to work?" Of course this question will be answered differently by each person, because no two situations are alike. Mike was out of work for about 9 months from the time that he first experienced his non-healing wound, had the amputation, and recovered from surgery. Elaine returned to her job on the 1-year anniversary of her accident. It took her some time to regain her physical strength and learn to ambulate with her prosthesis. As you read in Billy's feature story, it took him nearly 10 years to recover both physically and emotionally before rejoining the workforce. For me, it was 3 years before I began working again. During that time I had 5 surgeries due to cancer, and lost 2 people who were very dear to me; both my sister-in-law and my father passed away during the 1st year following my limb loss. So as you can see, it's not always just recovering from the amputation that keeps us from returning to work. For some it may come sooner, especially if there are no secondary health conditions to deal with. Others may take more time due to other complications or family situations. Still others may decide not to seek employment. Which led to my next question, "Why did you choose to return to work?" Mike answered that returning to work was a goal that he had to demonstrate that "I was still me" and that my life could and would continue as normally as possible. I also wanted to retire on my own terms, not because I had to. For Elaine, she returned to her employment as a life insurance agent, because she loved her job helping people prepare for the unknown. In addition, the added income was a help to her family. Billy's rejoining the workforce came from his desire to find a new purpose in life. For me, it was mostly a financial decision. The combination of all my surgeries, prosthetic needs, and high deductible insurance made it necessary for me to return to work. I also began to realize that I needed to start getting back out into the world again.

Both Mike and Elaine returned to their previous positions. Mike as a KY State Probation Officer and Elaine as a life insurance agent. I asked each of them if their supervisor or coworkers treated them differently when they returned to work. From Mike, "There was a misguided attempt to exempt me from some physically taxing areas of training and duties, but I did not take advantage of them and requested that I be treated the same until I demonstrated that I could not accomplish training requirements. I returned to full duty in two months after demonstrating competence in performing all of my duties." He also said that some of his coworkers acted as though he had a communicable disease. "However, once it was clear that I wasn't

- Continued on Page 5 Column 1 -

SEPTEMBER RECAP (cont'd)

election. By a unanimous vote, the final results were to retain all current officers. The officers are:

Belinda Jacobi – President
Kelly Reitz – Vice-President
Elaine Skaggs – Secretary
Julie Randolph – Treasurer

Mike Portman – Board Member-at-Large

Belinda told the officers that a special Officer's Meeting will be called within the next 2 months to discuss group matters and to develop the rules for the new scholarship to the Amputee Coalition National Conference that the group will begin providing in 2019. During the business meeting Belinda informed the group that all necessary Federal and State filings had been completed for the year. The financial reports were presented and reviewed. The attendance records were discussed. The decision was made to continue our Louisville meetings at Norton Brownsboro. Various other topics including our peer visitors, care packages, and food box programs were discussed. It was decided to hold our Sock & Glove Drive for the Salvation Army in November, with the "Kick-off" at our Louisville meeting on Oct. 27th. There was much on the agenda, and Belinda encouraged group members to contact her with ideas or concerns. Following a motion made to close the meeting, it was approved, and the meeting was called to a close.

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On September 13th, *Moving Forward* took part in the biggest day of local online giving. *Give for Good Louisville* is sponsored by the Community Foundation of Louisville and allows donors to contribute to the charity or charities of their choice online during a 24 hour period. This was our 4th year participating and it was an amazing day for us! Kelly Reitz



represented our group during the Midday Rally at 4th Street Live. She passed out group information and connected with many of the other organizations taking part in the event. A highlight was when she was called up on stage to collect a Golden Ticket which our group had won. This \$1,000.00 prize was sponsored by Delta Dental. Several Golden Tickets were awarded during the day. They were randomly

attached to incoming donations.

While Kelly was attending the rally, other group members were busy at the Okolona Fire Station. We once again did a live presentation on Facebook during *Give for Good Louisville*. *Moving Forward on Facebook Live* was hosted by group members Belinda Jacobi and Bill Titus. Mike Portman served as the cameraman and technician for the 9 hour event. The co-hosts interviewed group members and local government officials throughout the day. We wish to thank Metro Councilwoman Madonna Flood for stopping by to talk with us between her many meetings. One of the most memorable interviews came from Bill and his physical therapist Maureen Kelly. They began by demonstrating how Bill puts on his prosthetic arms and legs. He then got up from his power chair and walked across the room with the aid of using a walker. Bill

- Continued on Page 5 Column 2 -



## SPOTLIGHT (cont'd)

concerned, they quit acting like I was *catching*," he said. Elaine stated that she was very well received upon returning to work, and that her clients and coworkers were glad to have her back.

I next asked those who changed jobs or who, like Kelly, was seeking her 1st job, "When you went in for your interview, did you let them know up front that you were an amputee?" Kelly acknowledged that she didn't bring it up during her interview, and she wore slacks so that her legs wouldn't be noticed. She said her hands couldn't be covered, so the interviewer would have noticed that. She put on her best game face and let her qualifications speak for themselves. It was her first interview with such a large company, and she was fresh out of college, but she got the job and is in her 14th year of working for Humana. As for me, I had decided to try for a job in the medical field, and luckily was called in for an interview at the first place I applied to. I debated whether to mention my limb loss during the interview, and I decided to just *wing* it and see if it felt as though I needed to bring it up. I wore slacks, so my leg was covered, but what I forgot to do was to turn off the pump on my vacuum suspension system. You see, if it detects a loss of suspension, it kicks on making a humming noise for a few seconds. My interview had barely started when it started humming. I noticed my interviewer looking around for the source of the noise, so I explained to him that I was an amputee and that noise was coming from my prosthesis. I'm sure that was a first for him, but we were able to get right back down to the interview. It also helped in explaining why I had been out of the workforce for 3 years. I worried for the next few days and wondered if his knowledge of my limb loss would cause me not to get the job. I had also seen some very professional looking younger ladies in the waiting room who were there to interview for the same position I was. After a few more days, I received a job offer. It wasn't the job that I had initially applied for, but it was for a job in medical records that would be more sedentary. I do feel that my limb loss was the reason for that switch in positions, but it turned out okay because I really enjoyed the research involved in the medical records position.

That leads to my next question, which was, "Do you feel that you were ever turned down for a position or a promotion due to your limb loss?" Kelly answered that she had been turned down for jobs, but she feels that it was because she was not qualified for them or it was not a good fit. She never felt that she didn't get the job due to her limb loss.

My next question was one that I heard on my very first day at my new job, and I wanted to know if any of the others had been asked this question, "Why didn't you just go on disability?" I was asked by the lady sitting next to me only a few minutes after I reached my desk. She couldn't see my leg, so I knew that the word was out that an amputee was working in the building. I smiled and said, "I don't really need my leg to use a keyboard." She smiled back, and we went on about our day. Mike said that he has been asked that question on numerous occasions, and his answer is always the same, "I am not disabled."

I finished by asking for any advice that they might share for amputees who want to return to an existing job or to begin a new or a first career. Kelly said that it's important to be yourself and to let your resume speak for itself. If you show a good work ethic and a positive attitude, it will help you to go far. Mike responded by saying that you need to be honest with yourself. Realize that you are not necessarily going to be fully capable depending on your amputation level. While the employer is required to make reasonable accommodations for you, to perform your job, that you must be able to do the job without making unreasonable demands for accommodations. I think this is what Billy realized when trying to return to his position as a welder. He turned that

- Continued on Page 6 Column 1 -



(cont'd)

is a quadrilateral amputee. His amputations are above-the-knee on both legs and below-the-elbow on both arms. Since receiving his prosthetic legs, Bill has worked diligently to learn to use them and to begin walking once again. He recently reached a long term goal when he was able to walk into his church for the first time since losing his limbs. It was a proud moment for him and also everyone in attendance.

We would like to thank group members Debbie Troutman, Dorothy May, Elaine Skaggs, and Sharon Morehead for taking



part in our interviews. A special thanks to our youngest member 9-year-old Reid Hester, his brother Patrick, and his mom Colleen for stopping by after school for an interview. Colleen had instructed Reid to be very polite and to use

his best manners. I have never heard so many "yes, ma'ams" and "no, ma'ams" in my life. He was still his rowdy, adorable self and filled us in on his latest school and sports activities. Colleen talked about some of the difficulties that parents of children with limb loss go through in getting insurance approval for prosthetic coverage.

Philip Randolph provided musical entertainment throughout the day by playing his drums. It was only fitting that he closed out the event with a grand finale.

The ***Moving Forward*** on



***Facebook Live*** event was meant to bring some excitement and draw attention to our participation in *Give for Good Louisville*. I think you would agree that it accomplished that. It also had a second purpose, and that was to inform people as to what our group does, how it has been a positive effect on many people's lives, and to educate the public about living with limb loss. If you haven't viewed it yet, the videos are on the group's Facebook page. We will also be showing portions of them at some upcoming meetings.

Due to your generosity, we had our best year ever participating in *Give for Good Louisville*. The donations for our organization during the event were \$2,815.00. An additional \$180.00 came in after midnight. Our total after fees and adding in the golden ticket was \$3950.45. During the event, we had 64 donors. The late donations came in from 6 additional donors. So that means that 70 donors donated nearly \$3,000.00 to ***Moving Forward***. For a small group such as ours, that is amazing!! We will also be receiving part of the pool prize money for having received over 50 donations. That money will be distributed by mid-October. So, we want to give a huge thanks to everyone who helped in making this such a successful day! Your contributions of time and monetary donations are greatly appreciated!!



## SPOTLIGHT (cont'd)

around, though, and found a new career path that he loves. I would agree with Mike that you need to be honest with yourself. That job that you once had might not be the right fit for you any longer. You may need to take some time and really think about what is important to you and what you want to do with the rest of your life. It's almost like graduating from high school or college again and having that feeling of 'now what'? This can be a scary feeling for anyone; especially someone that has just recovered from losing a limb or limbs, but it can also be an exciting time of exploring new careers, going back to school, getting some career training, or like Billy finding a new purpose in life.

Next month in the SPOTLIGHT column, I will be sharing some information on various resources that are available in helping you begin the process of returning to or finding employment.

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FUN WITH WORD SCRAMBLES

I'm making it a little more difficult this time! Unscramble these words and then use the letters in parentheses, which aren't in order, to finish the sentence. You can find the answers on Pg. 7.

NCRO ZEAM _____ ()
MKPNSUIP _____ () ()
HYA IERD _____ () _____
LIFLNAG ELSVEA _____ () _____
WRENIE SOATR _____ ()
MFIYAL FNU _____ () _____ () _____

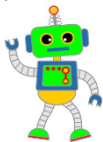
THESE ARE THINGS THAT YOU MAY SEE OR DO AT A FALL

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## Just a Touch of Humor by Belinda

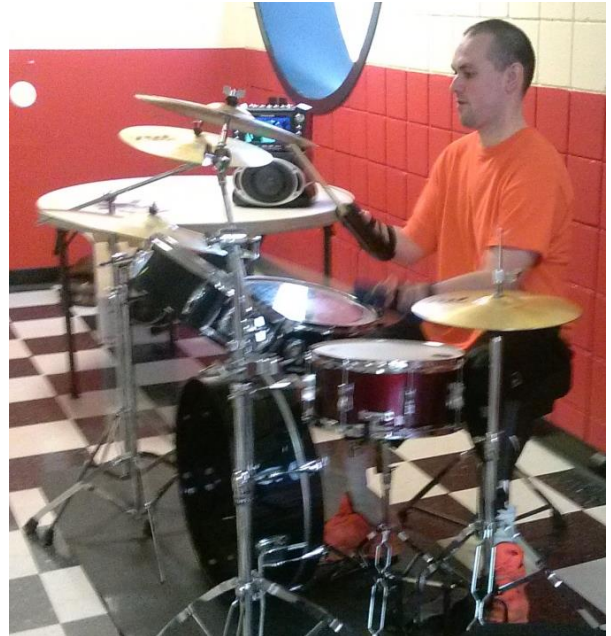
Oh from the mouths of babes. We never know quite what they will say. I had an encounter with a young boy a few weeks ago that I'd like to share with you. I was on an elevator when it stopped on a floor to allow people to enter. A young boy and his mother got on and immediately I saw his little eyes become larger as he was staring at my prosthetic leg. I prepared myself for the typical question, "Is that a robot leg?" I was surprised when instead he said, "Lady why are you wearing that weird shoe?" I chuckled and smiled at his mother to try to relieve some of the horror I could see through her facial expression. I then looked at the little boy and replied, "You don't like my shoe? I thought it was kind of cool." His response as his mother quickly whisked him off the elevator, "Well it's not, and you should quit wearing it." I chuckled again and quickly answered before the door closed, "I don't know. I still kind of like it, so I'll have to think about it." Hey, I was never one of the cool kids, so why start now.

Last weekend I attended my great-niece's birthday party. Her younger brother is in the 1st grade and is a bundle of curiosity. Needless to say, my prosthesis fascinates him. If I happen to be wearing long pants, he will always ask me, "Do you still got your robot leg, Aunt Belinda?" I always assure him that I do, but to satisfy his curiosity he always takes a peak under my pant leg. This time was a little different though; he decided to do a little experiment. I had on capri pants so my prosthesis was clearly visible. His little mind devised a plan to test my robotic powers and before I knew it he took a big jump and came down to rest on my prosthetic foot. His eyes fixated on me to see my response. I calmly looked at him and said, "See, it didn't hurt a bit. It really is a robot leg." He nodded his head and was off to play. I guess I will have to watch him a little more closely next time just in case he decides to test my robotic powers even further. It's all in the name of science, though, so who am I to stand in his way.



## I'm Moving Forward . . .

Each month we are including a picture of our members *moving forward* after limb loss.



Philip Randolph *moving forward* by playing the 'grand finale' at Moving Forward on Facebook Live.

\*\* If you have a picture that you would like to submit, please send it to Julie or Belinda. \*\*

~~~~~

NATIONAL PHYSICAL THERAPY MONTH

During the month of October, the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) will be raising awareness of physical therapy being a safe and effective alternative to opioids for the treatment of chronic pain conditions via its [award-winning #ChoosePT campaign](#).

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## MENTAL ILLNESS AWARENESS WEEK

IN 2018, NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) will promote the theme of "Cure Stigma" during the week of Oct. 7th - 13th. According to NAMI, 1 in 5 Americans are affected by mental health conditions. Many of these individuals do not seek help due to the stigma against people with these conditions. This stigma forces them to remain silent and to not receive the help they need, and sometimes it even takes their life.

For more information visit: <https://www.nami.org/Get-Involved/Raise-Awareness/Awareness-Events/Mental-Illness-Awareness-Week>

Together we can #Cure Stigma.

~~~~~

October 11th is National Depression Screening Day

This day began as an effort to reach individuals across the nation with important mental health education and connect them with support services. To take a short, free, and anonymous screening go to: <http://helpyourselfhelpothers.org/>.



KATE'S KITCHEN

Sausage & Vegetable Soup

This hearty, comforting soup will keep you warm all season long!

Ingredients:

6 ounces rotini noodles
 5 Italian Sausage Links, grilled until cooked through and then sliced
 6 cups beef broth (vegetable broth also okay)
 1 15-ounce can tomato sauce
 1 15-ounce can diced tomatoes
 2 celery stalks, chopped
 1 small onion, diced
 1 cup baby carrots, chopped
 1 cup canned or frozen green beans
 1-1/2 teaspoons Italian blend seasoning (or equal parts dried basil, dried thyme, and dried oregano)
 2 teaspoons salt, or to taste
 1/2 teaspoon cracked black pepper, or to taste
 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes
 fresh thyme or parsley and grated parmesan cheese, optional



Instructions:

1. Place noodles in a large pot and cover with water. Bring to a boil over high heat and cook for 7 - 9 minutes until tender. Drain noodles and set aside.
2. In a large pot combine broth, tomato sauce, diced tomatoes, celery, onions, carrots, green beans, Italian seasoning, salt and pepper, and red pepper flakes and stir to combine. Bring to a boil and cook for 10 - 12 minutes or until veggies are tender.
3. Stir in sausage and noodles. Taste, add salt and pepper if needed, and serve. Garnish with fresh thyme and grated parmesan cheese if desired.



Krafty Kids by Katie

Paper Plate Owl

This will make a fun Halloween decoration. Make several and hang them in a window to welcome your trick-or-treaters!!

What you'll need:

Paper plates
 Brown paint
 Construction paper in yellow, black, white, and orange
 Scissors
 Glue

Yarn (optional)

Paint the paper plates brown and let dry. Then trace these patterns onto the construction paper as follows:

2 large circles – yellow
 2 medium circles – white
 2 small circles – black
 1 triangle – orange

Cut out the patterns. Glue the white circle to the center of the yellow circle, then glue the black circle to the center of the white circle. Repeat.

Cut one of the paper plates in half for the wings. Trim the top of the remaining paper plate to form two ears at the top.

Glue the eyes to the front of the plate and glue the beak directly below the eyes.

Glue the wings to the back of the body plate.

You can tape a piece of yarn to the back to create a hanger if you wish.



LET'S GET MOVING – by Belinda

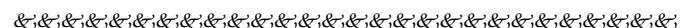
During the past few months, I have been sharing basic exercises with you in the hope of getting those of you who spend most of your time in a wheelchair or just sitting to start becoming more mobile. I have stressed the importance of doing some weight bearing exercise if it is at all possible for you to do so. Even just a few minutes a few times a day can make a difference in your bone health. There are many amputees who give up on walking, and many do so out of the fear of falling. What they do not realize, though, is your chance of a bone healing properly due to a break from a fall, is much less if you haven't been weight bearing (walking). Even if you are in a wheelchair, you have to make transfers into and out of bed, on and off the toilet, and in and out of a tub or shower. The weaker your bones and muscles are, the greater the chance of a fall. I know that some amputees are confined to a wheelchair for various reasons; including secondary conditions or the loss of multiple limbs, but they, too, need to continue exercising the parts of their bodies that they can to make transfers easier and safer. Another benefit of getting out of a wheelchair or just up and moving is to help prevent skin conditions, such as bed sores and heat rashes.

In the August issue, I asked you to begin by going to your kitchen sink or a sturdy table and just standing up for as long as you could. You could use the sink or table to hold on to if needed, but gradually to begin loosening that death grip until you could stand without holding on. I then told you to try marching in place and stepping from side to side along the counter or table. This month, let's add a few more simple exercises. Try doing a few small squats while holding onto the counter. Just bend your knees slightly and then straighten them. If you are just beginning, try doing 5, then resting a minute and then doing 5 more. Each time that you exercise, try to add 1 or 2 more. Some good balance exercises are: Side sways – Just stand at the counter and shift your weight from one leg and then to the other. Foot position exercises – Stand with one foot slightly in front of the other and try to keep your balance for 30 seconds without holding on to the counter (it's there if you need it!). Put your other foot in the front and go for 30 more seconds. Once you get comfortable doing this, increase your time and try doing it while turning your head from side to side. The next step will be to do the same exercise on an uneven surface. So place an exercise or other foam mat or a bed pillow on the floor (if you are doing these on a hard surface floor, you need to put a non-slip rug under the mat or pillow), then step up onto it to do your balance exercises. Again, as you gain confidence add more time until you can balance for up to 2 minutes in each position.

Okay, we are up and improving our balance. Next month I will share more exercises for beginners or for anyone who hasn't been getting much exercise lately. I will admit that I haven't been getting as much exercise as I need to as of late.

So together, **LET'S GET MOVING !!**

Reference: These are all exercises that I was taught recently while attending a Cancer Recovery Program at KORT Physical Therapy.



FUN WITH WORD SCRAMBLES ANSWERS (from Page 6)

CORN MAZE, PUMPKINS, HAY RIDE, FALLING LEAVES, WEINER ROAST, FAMILY FUN

THESE ARE THINGS THAT YOU MAY SEE OR DO AT A FALL FESTIVAL.



LIFE HACKS FOR MOVING FORWARD



— by Belinda

You might be asking, "What is a life hack?" According to the dictionary, a life hack is a simple tip or trick that helps us to get a day-to-day tasks or activity done more easily. As an amputee, you know that once simple tasks can now become a frustrating battle of the wills. So we have decided that we will begin sharing **Life Hacks** in this new column. We ask that you send us your tips and tricks to daily living so that we can pass them along. Remember, this is not advice from a medical professional, but ideas from people just like you who are dealing with limb loss.

It's officially the Fall season now, and for many women out there that means one thing; getting out our favorite sweaters and fall boots. For ladies that are amputees, those fall boots may pose a problem. I know my favorite pair did



when I put them on following losing my right leg. Where there is a will there is a way, and I loved those boots. I still do, and have been wearing them every fall and winter for at least the last 15 years.

As you know, most prosthetic feet are made for a 3/8 inch heel height. That is why tennis shoes are the norm, because that is their standard heel height. What if, though, you have a shoe that has just a little higher heel than that; let's say a 3/4 or 1 inch heel. Do you have to throw out all of those shoes that you love? My answer is "no". One thing that you can do is to take them to a shoe repair shop to have some extra sole added. Just Google shoe repair or check your yellow pages. Another option is to ask your prosthetist for a shoe wedge that can be placed in the toe portion of the shoe. I found a simple way to take care of this problem, though, that I would like to share with you. All you have to do is take a shoe insole (such as a Dr. Scholl's) and cut it in two between the sole and the heel portion. If you go out to purchase a shoe insole, don't get an extra thick one. Remember, the goal is to just add that extra 1/4 - 1/2 inch to bring the sole of your foot up a little higher to match the heel height. Now, just slide that partial insole into the front of your shoe. You usually have to use the heel portion of the insole, because it is the thickest part. When putting on your shoe, make sure that it doesn't slide out of place. Now, you should be able to walk comfortably in your 3/4 - 1 inch heeled boots. I wouldn't attempt this with any higher of a heel, and if you wear high heels most of the time you may want to talk to your prosthetist about an adjustable heel prosthetic foot. There are several on the market, some are even computerized. If you are like me, though, and just want to wear those fall boots occasionally when you are going out for the evening, my life hack just might work for you. I have been asked if it will also work for sandals with heels. Yes, but you have to glue the insole in or it will slide out on you. There isn't as much shoe to hold it in place.

Now how do you get your boots on, once you have that insole in place? Mine actually lace down really far, so that doesn't pose a problem. I do have other shoes that don't slide on so easily, and I have found that a good metal shoe spoon works wonders. I carry one in my purse, so that if I want to try on shoes or just need to take my shoe off for some reason, I will be able to easily get it back on. I have also seen a YouTube video of a lady using a plastic bag to slide her shoe on. She just put the bag on her prosthetic foot, and then easily slides it into her shoe. She stuffed the excess bag into the shoe, so it couldn't be seen. She also said that the bag could be trimmed down so that there wouldn't be so much excess.

— Continued on Page 9 Column 1 —

UPCOMING EVENTS

MEETINGS:

Oct. 15th, Mon., from 6:30-8:00 pm, at Southern IN Rehab Hospital, 3104 Blackiston Blvd., New Albany, IN. The room number will be posted at the reception desk.

Oct. 27th, Sat., from 2:00-4:00 pm, at Norton Brownsboro Medical Plaza 1, 4950 Norton Healthcare Blvd., Louisville, KY, in Room 301B.

Guest speaker for this meeting will be Madeline Moses who is a pharmacist and diabetes educator. She will be sharing valuable information on the topics of pre-diabetes and diabetes. This will be a wonderful opportunity to learn about these life-changing diseases and to have your questions answered.

EVENTS:

On Sat., Oct. 20th, **Moving Forward** will host a *Fall Picnic and Walk & Roll* at Sam Peden Community Park, 3037 Grant Line Road, New Albany, IN. We will be at the 1st shelter on the right. The picnic will begin at 1:00 pm, followed by games at 2:30, and the Walk & Roll at 3:30. There is a handicapped accessible restroom and a playground beside the shelter. The Walk & Roll will take place on the 1 mile wheelchair and scooter accessible path around the beautiful lake. You are welcome to take part or to stay at the shelter and cheer on the participants. The group will be providing chicken, burgers, soft drinks, water, eating utensils, and condiments. You are asked to bring a side dish or two if you can. As always, family and friends are invited. TARC 3 does provide service to the park shelter. We hope you can join us for some good food, fun games, beautiful fall scenery, and enjoying the day with friends.

At the Oct. 27th Louisville meeting, **Moving Forward** will be "kicking off" our *Sock & Glove Drive for the Salvation Army*. We will be distributing boxes at the end of the meeting to be placed at businesses, churches, and other establishments throughout our community. We will be collecting until our Nov. 24th meeting. While our main focus will be on collecting socks and gloves, we will also be accepting new or gently used winter coats and hats. Please help us in our quest to prevent the amputation of toes, feet, fingers, and hands of homeless men, women, and children due to frostbite during the cold winter months. If you would like to help by placing a box or making a donation, please contact us.

~~~~~

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~~~~~



LIFE HACKS FOR MOVING FORWARD (cont'd)

So there you go ladies, don't give up on your favorite fall boots! Not to leave you guys out, this will work on your dress shoes or cowboy boots as well. Always remember that it shouldn't cause you any pain when you are walking or it shouldn't make you feel like you are constantly walking downhill. If it does, then the added insole is not the right height.

I'll be back next month with another **Life Hack**. If you have one to share, I'd love to hear it. Just contact me. My contact info is in this newsletter.

~~~~~

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