

Healthy Cells

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Comprehensive Prosthetics & Orthotics

Changing lives, one step at a time



Sleep: Its Effect On Your
Child's Daytime Behavior Pg 20

The Penguin Project Pg 25

Electronic Medical Records—
The Physicians Dilemma Pg 26



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Mission: The objective of Healthy Cells Magazine is to promote a stronger health-conscious community by means of offering education and support through the cooperative efforts among esteemed health and fitness professionals in Bloomington-Normal.

This Month's Cover Story:

Comprehensive Prosthetics & Orthotics Changing Lives, One Step At a Time

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Courtesy of DLA Creative/Comprehensive Prosthetics & Orthotics

Comprehensive Prosthetics & Orthotics patient Karson Milstedt (left); The CPO team (from left): Charu Tyagi, BS; Romel Bhandi, CP, BEO; Donald Goertzen, CP, LPO; Amit Bhandi, CPO.

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Cheryl Eash

Changing Lives, One Step At a Time

By: Amy Kennard, DLA Creative, Inc.

"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step"

If there is any quote that defines the philosophy of Comprehensive Prosthetics & Orthotics (CPO), it is this one. This growing practice provides custom orthoses including foot orthoses, and upper and lower extremity prostheses for patients in Central Illinois and beyond. But these practitioners, which include Don Goertzen, CP, LPO, Charu Tyagi, BS, Amit Bhandi, CPO and Romel Bhandi, CP, BEO, offer something else patients say is just as valuable: compassion and understanding.

"Charu saved my life"

When Vicki Radebaugh first met Charu Tyagi, she was in the same wheelchair she had occupied for six months. "My doctors told me I'd probably be there forever," said Vicki. She suffered from a hereditary foot condition that caused the bones in her feet to slowly deteriorate. "I had unknowingly broken my foot but continued to walk on it," she says. "When I finally had surgery, it was too late – it had healed improperly and I had overcompensated with my other foot for far too long." As a result, not only was she in a wheelchair, but on a multitude of medications for pain, high blood pressure, and depression.

What Charu didn't know when she first met Vicki was that she is a go-getter. Not only is she a homemaker aide, she and her husband, Mitch, are also the parents of five children – two biological, two adopted siblings, and one foster child, ages five to 28. They live on seven acres near Lake Camelot, about 20 minutes from Peoria. Before she became wheelchair bound, Vicki enjoyed four-wheeling, riding go-carts with her kids, and camping. "But it got to the point where I couldn't even walk to the mailbox," she

says. "I couldn't clean my house. I couldn't take care of my kids the way I wanted to." Vicki's physical limitations took a toll on her mentally, spiraling her into depression. "I was not myself, and had lost all hope," she recalls.

Hope came in the form of a referral from Vicki's orthopedic surgeon. "He gave me Comprehensive Orthotics & Prosthetics' name as a last resort. He said that if anyone could help me it would be them." She and her husband called CPO and had an appointment within the hour. "We didn't even have time to think," Vicki says, "but I was scared to death."

Vicki says she doesn't remember much about that first appointment. She recalls breaking down in tears, and how kind and encouraging Charu was. Explains Charu, "Vicki was depressed, in a lot of pain, and very sure that I could do nothing to help her." But before they left the office that day, Charu had made a plaster form of her right foot and told Vicki to return in two weeks to be fitted for her new brace. "I wasn't really processing what was going on at the time," Vicki says, "but I do remember for



Vicki has her orthosis adjusted by Charu Tyagi, BS, to compensate for the reduced swelling in her leg as a result of wearing the AFO brace. Vicki says the swelling she's experienced since she was 18 is now virtually gone.

Courtesy of DLA Creative/Comprehensive Prosthetics & Orthotics

"I really believe if it had not been for Charu, I would have just withered away from life and hid out here in the country," says Vicki.

Courtesy of DLA Creative/Comprehensive Prosthetics & Orthotics



the few minutes my foot was in that form, I had no pain – for the first time in 10 years."

Two weeks later, Vicki was fitted with an Ankle Foot Orthosis (AFO). This custom device supports the ankle and foot area while maintaining proper alignment and controlling motion. "I tried it on and it felt wonderful," she says. "I immediately felt the difference when I had that brace on."

Since that day, life has changed dramatically for Vicki – for the better. "I can get the mail, I can mow the lawn, I can four-wheel and go-cart with the kids. Sometimes I'll start dancing, and my kids look at me like I'm crazy – they forgot how goofy I am!" Incredibly, her overall health has improved as well. "I am no longer on my blood pressure medication or antidepressants," she says proudly. "I truly believe Charu saved my life."

Charu is modest about what she did for Vicki, but says these are qualities that set CPO apart. "Every practice in town probably makes similar orthoses," she notes, "but we put so much time and effort and love and compassion into every single device we make, and that is reflected back to our patients."

Vicki echoes Charu's thoughts. "The staff at CPO is very kind and concerned about their patients. When I think about everything that's happened, I just thank God that Charu came into my life when she did. She gave me back the life that I had been missing for a long, long time."

A prosthesis...and a promise

14-year old Karson Milstedt loves sports. A typical teenager, he plays basketball, runs track, and pitches for his high school baseball team. What you wouldn't know from just watching him is that he has a prosthetic leg.

Born with a condition that resulted from constricted blood flow to portions of the fetus, Karson's right leg was amputated at the knee before he was a year old. His mom, Aimee, says that didn't keep him down. "When he was five, he jumped off the diving board and swam the length of the pool. He skateboards. He runs. He jumps. I tell him there's nothing he can't do."

For most of his life, the family relied on Shriners Hospital for his care. "They help children like Karson learn to get around, and fit them with basic prostheses," she explains. "They took care of him for most of his youth, and I am so thankful to them for that." But Aimee knew that if Karson's love of sports continued, he was going to need a prosthesis that would be more conducive to his active lifestyle.

Karson's baseball coach of three years, Matt Plummer, agreed. With Karson's old prosthesis, he would develop sores and blisters, simply because of the demands he placed on it. Every morning before he played sports, he had to clean his stump, douse it in powder and cover it with two socks before sliding it in to the prosthesis. In some cases, he would have to



Don Goertzen, CP, LPO, checks Karson Milstedt's prosthesis during a routine visit. Because Karson is growing so fast, the prosthesis has to be lengthened often.

Courtesy of DLA Creative/Comprehensive Prosthetics & Orthotics

Feature Story continued

change those socks between games or sports.

Seeing Karson's commitment and desire to excel, Coach Plummer organized a benefit and set up a special fund to help pay for the cost of a sports prosthesis – a bill that was expected to be around \$25,000. Through a series of phone calls, he was put in contact with Don Goertzen, a certified prosthetist at CPO, who set up an appointment with Karson and his coach the very next day. "As I was trying to explain to Don what we were looking for in a prosthesis for Karson," Coach Plummer says, "Don pulled up his pant leg and said, 'Something like this?' We had no idea he was an amputee himself. It was such a memorable experience and so great for Karson to be able to talk to someone who had been dealt the same hand."

"Karson's the kind of kid we like to help," says Don. "He has higher needs and high expectations of himself." With a handshake and a promise of a new prosthesis, a friendship was formed.

Don called in a few favors to some prosthetic manufacturing companies he works with, and helped design a custom-made sports prosthesis with a triple suspension leg. "Suspension is everything when you're running," Don explains. "With Karson's old leg, he would go through three or four suspensions a month when he was only really allowed two a year. This new prosthesis locks him into it three different ways, so it's more comfortable and won't fall off."

In addition to being more comfortable, the new prosthesis allows him to run with less effort, to pivot, and absorb the force of his body when he steps off the pitcher's mound. "There's been a big change in him," Aimee says. "With the old leg, he'd have to take it off for two days to let his sores heal. With his new leg, he's hardly out of it at all. In fact, I think his activity level has probably doubled."

"What sets CPO apart is the little things," says Aimee. "Since Don is an amputee himself, he knows. He's been there. When Karson complained of chafing on his leg, Don recommended what works for him – Liquid Band-Aid®. No one had mentioned that to us before."

She continues, "Karson really bonded with Don. He knows Don can relate to him. And they get along great." In fact, Don has attended Karson's basketball games – not only to check out his sports prosthesis in action, but to see Karson perform in the sport he loves so much.

"I get very involved with the amputees – they are my friends, and I want to spend time with them and help them succeed," Don



"All you have to do is meet this kid and you're sold," says Karson's baseball coach, Matt Plummer. Matt was the driving force behind getting Karson's sports prosthesis.

says. "Karson knows that I know what he has to do to compete, and we are all excited for him and happy to be a part of it. He's our star."

Karson, like any typical teenager, is a young man of few words when it comes to his appearance, not wanting anyone to think of him as any different from anyone else. But he does have a something to say when it comes to his friend Don. "He's a great guy. He has helped me achieve my dreams more than anyone else possibly could have."

Coach Plummer is a fan of Don's as well. "Everything that I've seen him do and every word that comes out of his mouth has been just sheer generosity. I just can't thank him enough for what he's done for Karson."

Don, Charu, Amit and Romel all think alike when it comes to their patients, no matter what their needs. "CPO is committed to providing the best possible care that is available today," says Charu. "We work as a team and every single member of our team is compassionate and committed to doing our very best for our patients – every day."

Comprehensive Prosthetics & Orthotics has offices in Bloomington, Peoria and Peru. For more information, contact Comprehensive Prosthetics & Orthotics at 309-676-2276 or e-mail info@cpousa.com.

Courtesy of Aimee Misteck