**Rehabilitation Center for Children and Adults**

300 Royal Palm Way • Palm Beach, Florida 33480
Telephone (561) 655-7266 • Fax (561) 655-3269
info@rcca.org • www.rcca.org

**Surgeon brings increase in patients to rehab center**

Palm Beach Daily News, Sunday, August 9 through Wednesday August 12, 2009

Harry I. Etelman bequested over a million dollars to the Rehabilitation Center for Children and Adults. He was very grateful for the help and physical therapy provided at the Rehabilitation Center for his wife, Ethel. During their lifetime he wrote “our contribution is to your worthy organization. Please continue your good work.” Through Mr. Etelman’s local attorneys, a will was prepared that does indeed ensure that those good works will continue.

When 10-year-old Graham Rider of Essex, Conn., prepares for a dip in the pool, he has a few more steps to take than most.

On one of his recent regular visits to the Rehabilitation Center for Children & Adults in Palm Beach, his mom, Paulette, slips a pair of basketball-style shorts up to his hips.

The shorts are slit up the side to allow them to fit over two sets of external fixators on his legs. Graham and his mom remove gauze wrapped around pins connected to his bones. He winces as he removes one piece of gauze. “Ouch.”

**STORY BY DAVID ROGERS CONTINUED ON PAGE 6**
Expenses for the year ended 8/31/09

$2,639,548

Program Services
Management and General
Fund Raising

88%
4%
8%

1,044 People Served

23% Children
77% Adults

19,441 Treatments Provided

21% Speech Therapy
46% Physical Therapy
20% Occupational Therapy
13% Preschool

Revenues Budgeted 2009-2010

$2,757,000

County Commissioners 3%
Scottish Rite 1%
Program Fees, Insurance,
Medicare, School District
Contributions 23%
Investments 42%
Bequests 11%

Diagnoses

72% Musculoskeletal
15% Neuromuscular
13% Speech

County Residence

54% Town of Palm Beach
North County
South County
West County
Central County

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A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION (CH 83) AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL FREE WITHIN THE STATE 1-800-435-7352. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE. 100% OF ALL CONTRIBUTIONS ARE MAINTAINED AND DISTRIBUTED BY THIS ORGANIZATION.

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The Professional Endowment Committee introduces the Rehabilitation Center’s mission and needs to our financial neighbors. Members represent key financial institutions in the Palm Beach area. Most are surprised to learn that half of our 2.5 million dollar budget helps families who are uninsured or under insured. Thornton (Tim) Henry, an estate planning attorney with the law firm of Jones, Foster, Johnston & Stubbs, and Past President of the Board of Governors at the Rehabilitation Center, serves as Chairman of the Professional Endowment Committee. At the quarterly committee meetings, members review the latest relevant estate tax information. Annually, the committee sponsors an Estate Planners Reception for attorneys, accountants, trust officers and members of the Center's Board of Governors. Guests learn how to help the Rehabilitation Center through planned gifts such as wills and charitable trust agreements.

The Professional Endowment Committee also helps increase our neighbors' awareness of our needs and services. These professionals represent expertise our donors can call upon, as they know both the importance of endowments to our mission and the value of estate planning for the donor’s family. We believe the work of this committee will help insure the financial security of the Center now and in the future. If you know of someone who might be interested in more information, please call the Rehabilitation Center at 655-7266, or contact one of the committee members pictured here. The Rehabilitation Center for Children and Adults is grateful these women and men choose to donate their professional and personal time helping children and adults with physical disabilities.
Rehabilitation Center for Physical Therapy

Dedicated to improve people’s physical function

PHYSICAL THERAPY

DIAGNOSES TREATED

- Arthritis
- Athletic Injury
- Back & Neck Pain
- Balance & Vestibular Problems
- Cardiac Rehabilitation
- Carpal Tunnel Syndrome
- Cerebral Palsy
- CVA, Stroke
- Developmental Delay
- Hand Injury
- Knee & Hip Replacement
- Mastectomy
- Musculoskeletal Problems
- MS, Parkinsons
- Neurological Disorders
- Orthopedic Injuries
- Rotator Cuff Tears
- Speech & Language Delay
- Spinal Cord Injury
- Tendonitis
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Work Related Injury

- Therapeutic equipment
- Electrical stimulation
- Fluidotherapy
- Pilates
- TENS
- Ultrasound
- BTE Workstation

AQUATIC PROGRAM

300 Royal Palm Way • Palm Beach
info@rcca.org   www.rcca.org
for Children and Adults

function, communication and independence

THERAPY

Activities of Daily Living
Ambulation
Balance
Communication
Coordination
Muscle Function
Range of Motion
Self Care
Strength

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Photos by Kelli Jacobs & John Stone
Thin tracks of exposed muscle tissue illustrate the movement of the metal frames as they slowly stretch his upper and lower leg bones across 10 weeks. In about a week, the device, tightened by Graham four times a day with an Allen wrench, will have added a total of 4 inches to his legs.

Dr. Dror Paley, a pediatric orthopedic surgeon at St. Mary’s Medical Center, performed limb-lengthening surgery on Graham on June 3. It involved implanting the external fixators and then fracturing the leg bones. As the soft tissue on each side of the fracture attempts to close the gap and calcify, the fixators extend the distance between the bones, a little at a time, to lengthen them.

While he has moments of pain — and can’t walk outside the pool for now — Graham says the procedure was worth it.

His growth has been stunted by achondroplasia dwarfism. Without the surgery, he would likely reach only 4 feet in height. This, another leg surgery he plans to have in three years will help him reach 5 feet. He wants the added height “so I could be able to ride roller coasters that I really like and be able to play basketball with my friends and not have the basketball hoop as low as it can be, and so that I can run faster than I normally do.”

It also will allow him to reach a sink without standing on his toes, he says. And will keep insensitive children from jokingly using his head as an armrest. That’s happened more than once, he says. While some little people disagree with limb-lengthening surgery, asserting that they should be accepted as they are, the procedures, including one planned in coming years to lengthen Graham’s arms, will give him a better life, said Paulette Rider.

Her husband, also named Graham, takes the boy to rehab sometimes.

Little people can have difficulty reaching light switches, getting items out of upper cabinets and driving without extension equipment.

“I just think for us in our world, being able to function as normally as possible in an average home built for an average person was our goal,” Paulette Rider said. “Everyone has a different opinion. For us, the facts are he will have much more independence and much more opportunity in life just being able to function a little easier.”

A different reason for surgery

While Rider is adding height, Nate Allen, 13, of North Canton, Ohio, wants his leg growth stopped.

Nate was diagnosed with bone cancer at age 9. A complication from reconstructive surgery at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota required the removal of 2 inches from his right leg. Last summer, while still practicing in Baltimore, Paley corrected the alignment of a bone in Nate’s leg and drilled out his growth plates. He is now 5 feet, 10 inches, and the leg discrepancy has increased to 3 inches.

A recent surgery by Paley at St. Mary’s on Nate’s right leg — which implanted an external fixator — and another Nate will have at 16 or 17, will allow the teenager’s legs to be equal length. Nate said he wants to get back to a “normal” life. His dad, Jeff, a clinical director at a crisis intervention center, competes in triathlons, and Nate used to participate in them as well.

“I just want to be able to jump around like everybody, be able to do stuff (and) walk without having to walk on my toe or wearing a lift,” Nate said.

Nate and his mom, Laura, a second-grade teacher in Canton, are staying at Quantum House, on the St. Mary’s campus, while he completes pool therapy at the Rehabilitation Center.

Like dozens of other families, the Allens followed Paley to West Palm Beach for surgery and are spending months away from home during the limb-lengthening and/or limb-restoration process. Traveling to the Mayo Clinic for cancer surgery and chemotherapy separated the family for weeks on end, and so is this process.

Laura Allen has only seen her husband and her other son, 10-year-old Matt, twice in the past eight weeks. “It’s tough. There are tears on the phone and that’s hard to deal with. But this is for Nathaniel. We all know this. This is a family sacrifice.”

“What he went through before, going through cancer was 10 times, 1,000 times worse than this,” she said. “This isn’t fun. He doesn’t like looking at this (fixator). He doesn’t like knowing this goes directly in, but he knows that what he persevered through before was life and death. This is to make his life more bearable ... He’s had this period of being limited and now, he’s going to have his life back.

— drogers@pbdailynews.com
Activity at the Rehabilitation Center for Children & Adults was crawling along earlier this summer. Then, in mid-June, vans started dropping off new young clients every day. The children are arriving from St. Mary’s Medical Center, after coming to the Palm Beaches from across the globe for limb-lengthening or limb-restoration surgery.

Dr. Dror Paley, a pediatric orthopedic surgeon and limb-lengthening expert formerly with Sinai Hospital in Baltimore, joined St. Mary’s staff June 1, and is sending some of his patients to the facility on Royal Palm Way for water therapy.

“We would have been very slow as we are typically over the summer, but because these children need aquatic therapy daily, we are really busy,” said RCCA Executive Director Pam Henderson. Staff members have had to cancel vacations and the center has had to hire another physical therapist, she said.

“We’ve had some children come with one limb significantly shorter than the other, or a foot that is in bad alignment and has been corrected; and they go through a series of procedures through the years to try to equalize the length or the positioning of that leg,” said Ellen O’Bannon, the center’s physical therapy director.

As of Aug. 1, Paley had performed surgery on 135 patients. The Rehabilitation Center has provided ongoing therapy for 28 of them.

Water therapy is especially helpful for patients who have had bones broken in order to facilitate growth or reshaping.

“They don’t have as much discomfort when they are in the water,” O’Bannon said. “It’s not as stressful on the bones and on the healing tissue and we can incorporate some different, more fun activities than just straight stretching if they were in the gym.”

12 operating rooms

After a deal to move to an Orlando hospital fell through, Paley accepted St. Mary’s offer in late spring to set up shop in the Kimmel Building, on St. Mary’s 100-acre campus in West Palm Beach. The building has 12 operating rooms.

“They are able to give me multiple ORs at a time so I can stagger my patients, go from room to room to room, so it’s very efficient,” Paley said.

In the mid-1980s, the Canada native was the first North American to travel to Kurgen, Siberia, to learn to use the Ilizarov limb-lengthening procedure. That involves fracturing the limb to be lengthened and inserting stabilizing metal pins. By turning screws on the external fixator device a few times a day, patients can add 4 inches to the length of their limbs across 10 weeks, as desired. A second surgery for leg-lengthening is typical in the case of children with dwarfism.

Key to success

Paley selected the Rehabilitation Center because it offers water therapy.

“They do a very good job. Our patients are very happy with the PT [physical therapy], and rehab is the cornerstone of this treatment,” Paley said. “If I only did my surgery without the rehab, my success rate would suffer greatly.”

The renowned orthopedic surgeon’s presence is helping more than just the center, Henderson said.

“These children and patients also are in the community, and they are waiting on transportation and waiting on services,” Henderson said. “So we are seeing them go a few blocks away to the beach, and see Pan’s Garden and the Four Arts, and realizing they are going out to lunch at 264 (The Grill), and so it’s meant a lot to us and the community.”

The increase in patients is aiding the nonprofit center’s bottom line, but can’t be described as a boon because the patients largely require one-on-one care, Henderson said.

Patients’ families are learning about Paley through the Internet and are making sacrifices to travel wherever he is, Henderson said.

By the end of July, Paley had performed surgery on dozens of patients flown in from Honduras, Israel, Mexico, Nigeria, Spain, Turkey and numerous other countries, said Caroline Eaton, program coordinator at the Paley Advanced Limb Lengthening Institute.

“This is bringing a huge influx of people to this area,” Eaton said.

Paley said it is possible St. Mary’s will construct a therapy pool for his patients on its campus at some point, but any such development, if it happens, would be years in the making.

So, for the time being, slow summers at the Rehabilitation Center are a thing of the past.

— Story by David Rogers

Palm Beach Daily News Staff Writer
FUN WITH A PURPOSE

Pool at the Rehabilitation Center is ‘exercise in disguise’ to preschoolers

Daily News Photos by Jeffrey Langlois

Slide show and photos at PalmBeachDailyNews.com