PRO HEALTH

Miami Valley Hospital Vol. 21 – No. 3, 2001

A New Way of Life *Page 2*

Helping Dreams Become Reality *Page 5*

New Hope for Heart Patients *Page 9*

Winter Treats *Page 11*

Lending a Helping Paw *Page 12*

Bearing the Weight *Page 15*

Nurses Needed *Page 17*

PRO HEALTH

2 A New Way of Life
Known for his leadership in the spinal cord community, Tony Peth shares his inspirational story about overcoming tragedy.

11 Winter Treats
Impress your family and friends this winter with these tasty desserts.

5 Helping Dreams Become Reality
Parviz Daneshjoo, MD, has helped many area couples realize their dream of having a baby. Now, one of the original founders of Miami Valley Hospital's Fertility Center has passed the torch to a new director.

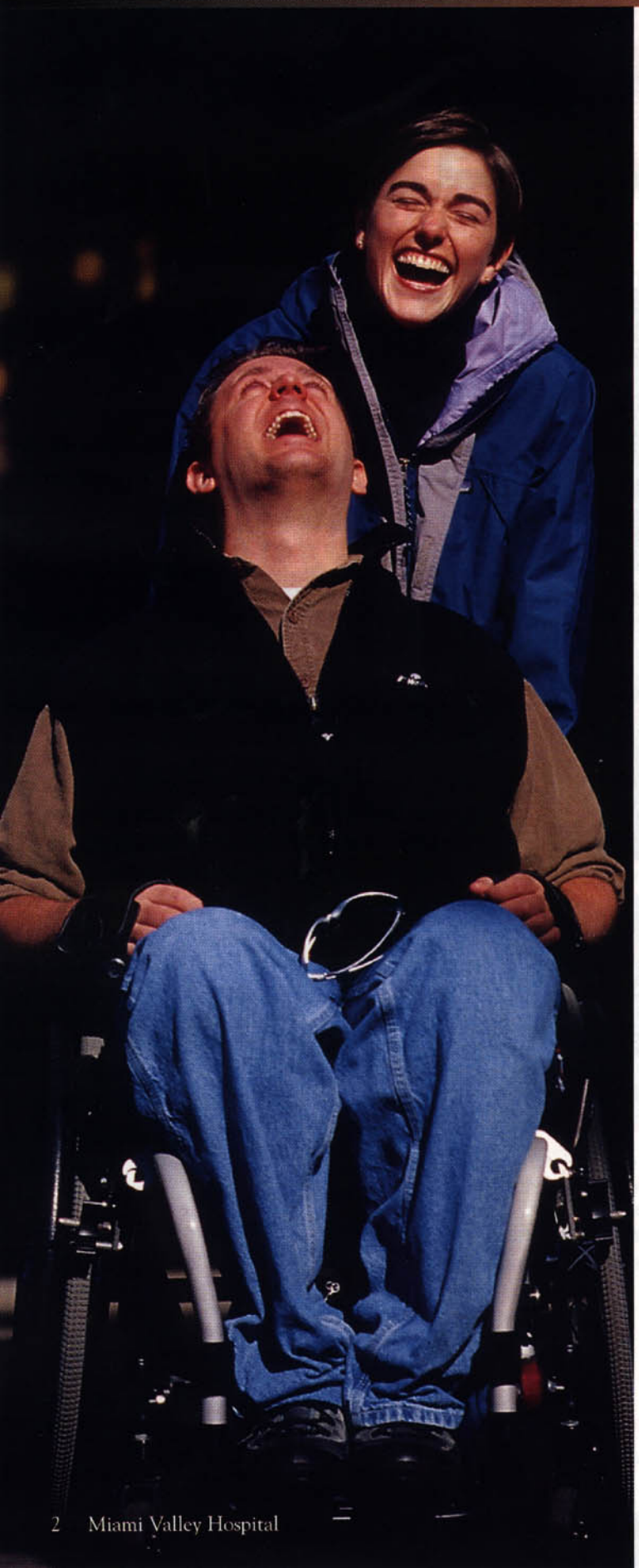
12 Lending a Helping Paw
A pet therapy program piloted two years ago at Miami Valley Hospital brings smiles and many benefits to an increasing number of patients.

9 New Hope for Heart Patients
Miami Valley Hospital was the first area hospital to perform a new procedure recently approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

15 Bearing the Weight
Incorporating resistance training into your weekly aerobic workouts can maximize your fitness potential and bring surprising results.

17 Nurses Needed
Miami Valley Hospital is doing its part to combat a nationwide nursing shortage through scholarship programs, sign-on bonuses and more.

19 News Briefs
Valley Legacy • *Premier Health Partners and Anthem Reach Agreement*
MVH Programs Receive Accreditations • *A Safe Haven for Abandoned Newborns* • PET Imaging Services Added to MVH



A New Way of Life

By Kim Cooke-Lorenz

At the age of 27, Tony Peth had it all. He was living life to the fullest. In May 1999, the Centerville native completed a master's degree and moved to San Diego to pursue a PhD and work in a research lab. He spent his leisure time mountain biking, downhill skiing and generally "living life on the edge."

On Aug. 1, 1999, the type of life he had been living came to a screeching halt. Tony was at Camp Pendleton Marine Base in San Diego on the last leg of a mountain biking and running race that combined different obstacles throughout the event.

"I was near the end of the race," he remembers. "The last obstacle required me to run and do a belly flop into a mudhole." In front of 500 spectators, Tony did the flop, breaking his fifth cervical vertebrae and landing face down in the water and mud. "I couldn't move. I was completely paralyzed," he recalls. A race employee quickly turned him over, or Tony would have drowned.

Tony was airlifted to an area hospital, then later transferred to a rehabilitation hospital in San Diego. On Oct. 1, he had recovered enough to return to the Dayton area where he spent the next month in the Rehabilitation Institute of Ohio (RIO) at Miami Valley Hospital. Following dismissal from the hospital, Tony continued as an outpatient for the next several months.

Tony and Ashley "seize the moment" on a beautiful fall day.

Spinal Cord Injury Program

The Spinal Cord Injury program at MVH offers a unique educational and training experience that addresses the rehabilitation needs and life-long issues of spinal cord injured (SCI) adults, adolescents and their caregivers.

The inpatient program bridges the gap between the patient's acute care hospitalization and safe return to home or the next level of care. The emphasis of inpatient rehabilitation is to maximize health and level of activity in order to facilitate safe return to and participation in the community.

The Comprehensive Outpatient Rehabilitation Program (CORP) assists the patient in making a transition from hospitalization to active functioning in the community.

A Spinal Cord Injury Follow-up Clinic provides opportunity for life-long follow-up of spinal cord injury issues. Staff also stay in touch indefinitely by contacting patients by phone at three months after hospitalization, then annually.

Learning to Cope

"I'm surprised it didn't happen sooner," Tony confesses, noting that he had experienced numerous accidents on his mountain bike over the years. "Because nobody else was to blame, I took the whole thing in stride. I just kept going."

Technically known as a C-5 quadriplegic, Tony is paralyzed from his chest down. He has some movement in his shoulders and arms. Following his rehab at Miami Valley Hospital, Tony began taking classes at Wright State University (WSU). "As I became physically stronger, I was more motivated to take on other tasks."

In the fall of 2000 he took a job teaching anatomy and physiology at WSU. That also was about the time he and some of his friends decided to give back to the community by starting a non-profit group to promote spinal cord awareness.

Tony's motivation was in response to the community support he received when friends and family helped purchase a wheelchair-accessible minivan so that he would have more mobility. "I thought, I can be doing this type of fundraising for others, too."

Tony's new wheelchair-accessible minivan gives him increased mobility.

Called Rapid Motion, the group's primary goal was to organize a fundraising event to support disabled athletes through the national Challenged Athletes' Foundation. More than 200 people participated in the first annual 5K run/walk at Centerville High School in June, raising nearly $16,000.

Making a Difference

"I've learned a lot about myself," says Tony, now 29. "You go from completely independent to totally dependent and you quickly learn patience and humility." One of the things that helps him most is meeting other people in similar situations. "It's encouraging to see someone who is 10 or 12 years out (from their accident or injury) and the amazing things they can do."

Tony believes his biggest accomplishment has been forcing himself not to use an electric wheelchair. "I've increased my strength a lot just by pushing myself manually in the wheelchair." He uses sand wrist weights for resistance training and frequently goes up and down the

...continued on next page

Dave Shuster, MD

"Tony is a role model. Not only did Tony do well functionally and mentally, he's also become a mover and shaker for the whole spinal cord community."

— Dave Shuster, MD

...continued from previous page

hills for blocks and blocks in his neighborhood. "Somebody always goes with me," he reassures.

Twice a week he works out at Wright State University's Research Park facility in Kettering, where technicians hook electrodes to his legs, allowing him to ride a stationary bicycle. "If you walked in and saw me, you'd think I was riding the bike on my own," he notes. "It's been very beneficial."

"Tony is a role model," says Dave Shuster, MD, medical director of the Rehabilitation Institute of Ohio (RIO) at MVH. "Not only did Tony do well functionally and mentally, he's also become a mover and shaker for the whole spinal cord community."

In addition to what he can do physically, Tony is involved with the spiritual and emotional aspects of living as a quadriplegic, as well. He often is asked to speak at area meetings and was one of the featured panelists for the MVH Spinal Cord Reunion, scheduled for, then cancelled, on Sept. 11, 2001. "Sometimes there's a lot of focus on things I can't do, because those are more obvious, but there's a lot I can do," he says. "I've found new talents – things I never knew I could do.

Spending much of his free time on a computer, Tony can use a trac ball, hitting the buttons with the small amount of movement he can produce in the side of his hand. He also uses a voice program for word processing.

"Life is definitely changed, but not necessarily everything is worse. Some things are actually better," he maintains.

Carrying On

Dr. Shuster says people sometimes ask him if his work is depressing. "It's not," he maintains, "because I work with people like Tony who suffer a major tragedy in their life, then learn to carry on.

For most spinal cord-injured patients, it takes awhile to become medically adjusted to their injury. Once they do, they get on with their lives. "So many of our former patients are role models for newly injured patients and those who are not progressing well."

Tony credits much of his success to support from his parents, his fiancee Ashley Porter, extended family and friends, both locally and on the West coast. "I've had a lot of help that most people don't have," he admits. He requires almost constant assistance, including a daily visit from a nurse. He knows he has a long way to go. "It's not likely that I'll ever be able to be completely independent, but there are plenty of things I can do."

"Our goal at Miami Valley Hospital is to get people back to doing what they want to do with their lives," says Dr. Shuster. "And Tony is doing just that. The main things we work on are independence and ADL, or activities of daily living. Ultimately, ADL becomes the achievement of the dreams in life which we all are working on."

Tony is making plans to return to the University of California, San Diego, in fall 2002 with his fiancee. In the meantime, he plans to study independently in the program he started before his accident.

For more information about the Spinal Cord Injury Program, call 208-2062.

A specially-equipped computer room helps Tony stay in touch through email and the Internet.