



SPRING 2014

VOLUME 25 ISSUE 3

WWW.SPINALCORD.AR.GOV

# Spinal Connection

## Sign Up for Spina Bifida Camp

With summer fast approaching don't forget it's time to sign up for Spina Bifida Camp. This year's camp is June 15 through June 20. Sign up now as the application deadline is May 15, 2014. Acceptance is based on a first-come, first-served basis, as there are only 40 slots available.

Camp provides an excellent opportunity for campers to participate in and experience activities that promote physical, social, and emotional growth. Parents are encouraged to let their children have this wonderful experience. The weeklong residential camp for children ages 6 to 16 is located at Camp Aldersgate, a quiet, rustic area in west Little Rock near Baptist Health Medical Center. ASCC clients with any type of spinal cord disability are welcome. There

is no fee for this week of camp.

Camp activities include: campfires and singing, canoeing, fishing, arts and crafts, swimming, and nature hikes. Activities that focus on creating a personal challenge include an accessible ropes course, hand and/or foot driven catamarans, adapted archery, and a big hit with older campers, SCUBA diving

Applications were mailed out in March, but may also be downloaded from the ASCC Website at [www.spinalcord.ar.gov](http://www.spinalcord.ar.gov). If you have questions regarding camp, or if you did not receive an application and would like one mailed, call Shalia Delph at (501) 296-1792 or (800) 459-1517 or via email at [shalia.delph@arkansas.gov](mailto:shalia.delph@arkansas.gov).

## ATRP Website Launch

The Arkansas Trauma Rehabilitation Program (ATRP) is launching a new website, [www.atrp.ar.gov](http://www.atrp.ar.gov), dedicated to resources for the disabled. It is the hope that this website will benefit all Arkansans, but specifically healthcare professionals working with people that have sustained traumatic injuries and the individuals and families working through the issues of living with a disability. We are in the process of adding more

and more resources each day, but feel that it is time to have the individuals that will be using this site review its contents and offer suggestions for additional content.

Please visit the new website, search for services and let us know of any issues you had or any services you were unable to locate by contacting ATRP with any suggestions at [atrp.info@arkansas.gov](mailto:atrp.info@arkansas.gov).

## ASCF Scholarship Deadline

The deadline to apply for the Arkansas Spinal Cord Foundation Sandra Turner Memorial Scholarship applications is June 30, 2014.

The Foundation will be awarding three \$2,000 scholarships this year to individuals with spinal cord disabilities who are either enrolling in college or a vocational/technical school for the first time or a current student who is reenrolling.

ASCF will award the scholarships in August 2014, just in time for the start of the fall semester.

"This is a great opportunity and benefit to any ASCC client who needs financial assistance to further their education," stated ASCC Executive Director, Patti Rogers.

A copy of the scholarship application and instructions for completion may be downloaded from the Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission website at [www.spinalcord.ar.gov](http://www.spinalcord.ar.gov) or you can call (800) 459-1517 to request a copy.

If you have any questions about the scholarship, please contact Mike Cranford, Scholarship Selection Chairman, via phone at (903) 826-3318 or via email at [mcran1857@gmail.com](mailto:mcran1857@gmail.com).

## SPINAL CONNECTION

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E-mail us at:

**[ascc@arkansas.gov](mailto:ascc@arkansas.gov)**

Call us at:

**(800) 459-1517**

### With Thanks

Donations this quarter from:

David Marcantel

Ronald Moore

Linda Berglund

Janie and Kenny Henry

*In memory of Kimberly Barnes*

ASCC accepts tax-deductible donations. To make a contribution send your donation to:

Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission  
1501 N. University, Suite 470  
Little Rock, AR 72207

### Passings

Don Cleghorn - November 8, 2013

Craig Byrd - November 23, 2013

Eva Mae Brooks - November 25, 2013

Ruby Trippet - December 26, 2013

Billy Prince - January 19, 2014

Steve Asp-Schussheim - January 26, 2014

Mary Gilchrist - February 1, 2014

Robert Bragg - February 9, 2014

Kimberly Barnes - February 14, 2014

Sherry Baker - March 6, 2014



## From the Desk of the Director

As a Rollin' Razorbacks fan for many years, I was very proud to learn that former coach Harry Vines was inducted into the Arkansas Sports Hall of Fame this year. Those of us who followed the Rollin' Razorback's during the 22 years (1978-2000) Harry was the coach remember the excitement of watching those games.

As a former coach myself, I loved watching Harry's passion. He was the epitome of what a coach should be like! Throw a towel or two, bend the referee's ear to make a point and fire up the team!

During his 22 years as coach of the Rollin Razorbacks, Harry led the team to 21 winning seasons, a record of 238-40, and five national championships. It seemed so appropriate that in 1991 the first national championship won by the Rollin Razorback was in Little Rock. How proud those of us in attendance were of our coach and players.

Over the years, Harry also coached US teams in the World Cup and Paralympics and was inducted into the National Wheelchair Basketball Association (NWBA) Hall of Fame in 2001. At the time of his death in 2006, he was the President of the NWBA. His heartfelt desire to serve his community by unselfishly volunteering his time brought many awards and honors of achievement his way. Over the years his awards consisted of the Governors Volunteerism Award (1980), Sherwood Chamber of Commerce Man of the year twice (1980 and 1983), and the Volunteer Action award presented by President George H. W. Bush (1990).

I spoke to Cheryl Vines, former ASCC Director, when she returned to Arkansas in February to accept the award on Harry's behalf. "I only wish Harry could have been here to accept this award as this would have been one of the greatest joys and proudest moments of his life," Cheryl lamented. Standing in the spotlight at the awards banquet to receive this great tribute I know Cheryl felt Harry's presence by her side.

During his years of playing basketball and coaching Harry's passion for the sport never waned. His dedication and achievements are to be commended. On behalf of the ASCC Commission and staff, ASCC clients and the Rollin Razorbacks we applaud Coach Harry Vines for his "slam dunk!!"

**Patti Rogers**

*Executive Director*

## The Commissioner's Corner

I would like to share a word of encouragement with others that have a spinal cord disability.

I survived a spinal cord injury 30 years ago. There certainly have been bumps and bruises along the way, but it has afforded me the opportunity to accomplish things that I otherwise may not have had the ability to do in my life.

After my injury I made the decision to be in control of my situation and what I wanted to accomplish; even if it meant that I was going to do some things wrong. I was a young man with a wife and two young babies at the time of my accident. I wanted to be able to support my family, despite my disability. I decided to attend college and I obtained a four-year degree in Marketing, with the goal of returning to work. I optimistically pursued my challenge.

I took the bull by the horns and tackled whatever obstacles or physical barriers that came my way. Some of the obstacles and barriers were very difficult, others small. I figured out quickly you can always find a way to just go around. You learn to make those decisions. Fortunately, some decisions you don't have to make by yourself. In my case, I had a family and friends to give me support and encouragement. I found work and soon realized having a job gave me much more. It gave me an opportunity to prove my capabilities to myself and my employer. I wanted to work and succeed. I realize not all of you with SCI/D want to attend school and work, and that's ok.

The important thing is to realize what it is that 'you' want to accomplish. Identify the barriers that may be standing in your way. These are the types of things you need to work out. Are there things that you can accomplish and control? Most importantly I would encourage you to not allow pride to stand in your way. What is pride? Is it keeping me back?

Often it is that we individuals

with disabilities use this to control what we don't do— does it control and give us excuses? That's for you to determine. The one thing I can share with you is that I was not a person that wanted to be a couch potato. I didn't want to just exist and sit in front of the TV screen or compute. I wanted to be the one in control. I wanted to do everything I did prior to my accident and accomplish even more. So, I made the decision that I would move forward with my life and I would take opportunities as they came, and I would make the best of it. I admit there were many times the obstacles in my life appeared to be more than what I thought I could handle. But, any way you look at it, each obstacle can become an achievable opportunity. I had the choice to let it stand in my way or knock it to the side and move forward. There were several things that I had to decide how to handle. Some things I did wrong and some I did right. But, I was not afraid to do them again, again and again if necessary.

I am an avid outdoorsman. I enjoy hunting, fishing and wood-working. These are activities that I found ways to do and be comfortable doing them. I am fortunate; I had people in my life that have helped me accomplish many things. The one thing you need to understand is that you need to allow individuals, family and friends to help you. Allow your case manager to guide and help you. All these people are capable of giving you ideas and suggestions to help you find solutions to the barriers and obstacles that may exist in your life. Know that it is okay to do some things wrong that you may have to do over. It's okay to make mistakes. The barriers I have broken and the obstacles that I have overcome are the things that I have accomplished in my life. As I look back over the past 30 years I say, WOW! How could I have done all these things by myself? Obviously, most things I didn't do by



*ASCC Commissioner Ronnie Wheeler  
Crossett, AR*

myself. I had someone that believed in me and accepted the opportunity to walk on the path that I was treading. My oldest son was one of those individuals. He grew up to be a real fine man. He pastors a church and he is also an avid outdoorsman. My son has helped me to do things I could not have accomplished on my own, including snow skiing. My wife has supported me throughout my quest and I could not have done without the support of many others. I now have four beautiful grandbabies that I will have the opportunity to love and share my life.

Life is not easy, but it also isn't hard. I experienced several surgeries, infections, and illnesses, that obviously were not easy; but they made me look at life differently and enabled me to think about what was really important to me – how I could make the best of life with the help of friends and family. There is much more I could share but, if I can give you just a small bit of encouragement it is that: 1) you can accomplish the things you want; 2) you can do the things you want to do if your attitude is right and your mind is set; and 3) allow people to help you. They wouldn't offer if they didn't want to help. You can either change your disability into opportunities to accomplish; or you can settle in and accept it as a disaster. The choice is for you to make. I encourage you to choose the right path for you and become dedicated and strong.

Whatever your decisions are and where ever you go, be in control! Otherwise, you have no one to blame but yourself.

# Aging and Spinal Cord Injury

It is a good news, bad news scenario. Individuals with a spinal cord injury (SCI) are living longer but having to put up with the aches and pains of old age. The life spans of those with SCI have significantly improved since 1936 when Dr. Donald Munro started the first service in the United States to address the health rehabilitation issues facing someone with a SCI. In 1940 the average life span of a person with SCI was 26 years, while the average life span of the general public was 58 years. In 2000 the average life span with SCI was 65 years, compared to 78 years overall. This was a 30% increase for the general public, but a 150% increase for SCI. However, getting older is not easy for any of us, and if you have a spinal cord injury it is even more difficult.

In the general population improvements in muscular endurance and strength peak at about age twenty. Mentally and socially we function at our peak at around age forty or fifty. The functional decline from these peaks on average is about 1% per year for the general population and about 1.5% per year for individuals with a SCI. There are many possible contributing factors for the increased rate of decline for individuals with SCI, including:

1. Multiple secondary medical conditions (UTI's, pressure sores, chronic constipation, osteoporosis, increased incidence of heart disease and diabetes, etc.);
2. Altered cellular aging and impaired immunity in SCI;
3. Age at the time of injury (older age is worse);
4. Era or decade (1950's, 1960's, etc.) in which the injury occurred (heavier wheelchairs, decreased efficacy of medications, predominate use of valium to manage spasticity, etc.);
- and 5.

Duration of time since the injury (increased wear and tear on the upper extremities and body).

So how do you accentuate the positives, and reduce the negatives of aging, and how do you manage the unavoidable decline in function that comes with aging?

I would submit to you the following suggestions:

1. A routine aerobic (increased heart rate, breathing and sweating) exercise program to improve endurance and increase HDL (the good cholesterol) is helpful, but you must use good exercise technique to protect your shoulders (hand cycles, wheelchair level exercises and swimming are a few suggestions).

2. Stop smoking if you do smoke, and do not start if you do not smoke.

3. Eat a healthy and nutritious diet. An easy diet to follow is to make sure you consume at least 5 fruits and/or vegetables a day. That will increase your fiber, provide a good source of vitamins and micronutrients, and leave less room for high calorie, low benefit foods.

4. Get adequate sleep, and if you have problems with daytime fatigue get evaluated for sleep apnea with a sleep study.

5. Get a yearly flu vaccination and a pneumococcal vaccination at least once (some health professionals recommend every ten years).

6. Avoid pressure sores, by doing your pressure relief, sitting on a good cushion, and checking your skin every day.

7. Get a yearly medical and functional evaluation. This will allow your physician and a physical or occupational therapist to address any problems you are having. Do not accept functional decline just because you're ag-



*ASCC Medical Director  
Tom Kiser, M.D.*



ing. There are a lot of medical problems that can develop (carpal tunnel syndrome, syringomyelia, poor posture, sleep apnea and arthritis - to name a few common ones) that can be treated.

8. Avoid the chronic use of narcotics if at all possible; Narcotics negatively affect the gastrointestinal tract and respiratory system in SCI, and also carry the risk of habituation and thus the need to go to higher doses over time.

9. Avoid the chronic use of benzodiazepines (i.e. Valium, Ativan, etc.) for spasticity. It is very difficult to wean from these medications after years of use. Benzodiazepines also tend to slow cognition and response time even in patients who deny these side effects. There are better medications for the treatment of spasticity now than in years gone by.

10. Prioritize your activities and goals. You need a long-term perspective. Spend time assessing where you are and where you want to go. Pace yourself and make incremental changes in your life to attain your goals.

11. Build and maintain a good social support system. Take good care of your family and friends. They need you and you need them.

It is possible to age with grace and minimize functional decline by making good choices!

Watch for  
More Exciting Details  
Coming Soon!



# ASCC Conference

SPINAL CORD DISABILITIES

BI-ANNUAL CONFERENCE & EXPO - SEPTEMBER 26, 2014

## HEALTHY Minds. HEALTHY Bodies.

**LOCATION:**  
**Benton Event Center**  
All new facility conveniently  
located just off I-30 in Benton, AR  
8:45 am.—5:00 pm.

**Early Bird  
Registration  
Starts July 1!**

A Day-Long Educational Conference for People with SCD, Families, Caregivers and Healthcare Professionals

### Empowering Individuals through Nutrition

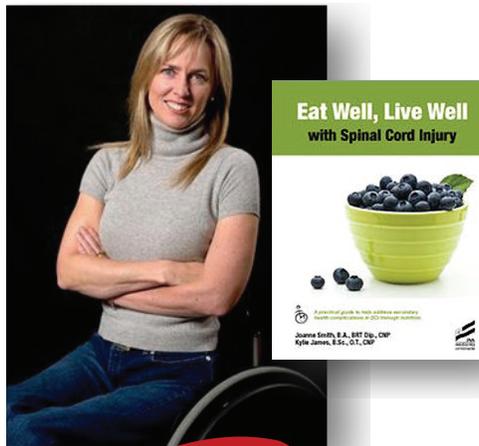
Maintaining health can prevent secondary complications from developing.

**Keynote Speaker:**

**Joanne Smith**

B.A., BRT Dip, CNP

Joanne Smith, certified nutritional practitioner, international speaker and co-author of *“Eat Well, Live Well With Spinal Cord Injury,”* will be this year’s keynote speaker.



### CONFERENCE EXPO:

Exhibit hall full of national, state and local vendors displaying the latest – from health foods and pharmacies to durable medical equipment, new products and assistive technologies. Attendees will have the opportunity to meet and greet with disability related organizations, hospitals, rehabilitation facilities, and statewide agencies.

### DEMONSTRATIONS:

See and learn about accessible vans and adaptive vehicles to aid in your mobility; what’s new in devices and mobility technology; hunting /trap shoot clubs for those with disabilities; and other activity based therapy and recreational equipment and Much More!

### ASK THE EXPERTS:

Interact with a professional panel of experts, this is your chance to ask questions and get answers.

### DOOR PRIZES! GIVEAWAYS!

*Continuing education units  
for healthcare professionals.*

**Wheelchair  
Giveaway!  
Show  
Specials!**



*Special Preview!*

### General Session Speaker:

**Dr. J. Scott Richards**



J. Scott Richards, Ph.D., ABPP, is the clinical psychologist and vice chairman of physical

medicine and rehabilitation department at the University of Alabama Birmingham.

Dr. Richards will conduct a general session on ‘SCI Adjustments vs. Acceptance’ and a breakout session presenting detailed information and interaction for caregivers on ‘Coping with SCD as a Caregiver.’

### Best Ever! Breakout Sessions! 2014 ASCC CONFERENCE

Learn how nutrition can prevent serious secondary health complications. Hear how focus on the psychosocial aspects aids positive mental health and learn about its importance to complete an overall balance.



## Executive Administrative Assistant Retires

Mary Jo Stanton has been the executive administrative assistant to the Executive Director of ASCC since the year 2000. Her retirement was marked on February 28th with a plaque presentation from Patti Rogers, ASCC Executive Director, and by those with whom her life has been intertwined for nearly 14 years.

When Stanton joined the staff she brought 20 years of state agency experience with her and quickly became a valuable asset to the agency. To anyone that might not have had Stanton's background and dedication the multi-faceted position of assisting the director in day-to-day operations might be a daunting one. It wasn't for Stanton. She stepped aboard, opened herself to chance, change, and opportunity—and moved onward and upward in her career at ASCC.

In her position at ASCC she served as liaison between the staff and the administration; handled in-and-out communications for the agency and the director's office. She processed new



*Patti Rogers, ASCC Executive Director presents Mary Jo Stanton a plaque to honor her service with ASCC*

referrals; maintained ASCC policies and procedures manual; supported the client services administrator and the ASCC Commissioners. She arranged schedules; prepared agendas and attended committee meetings and prepared meeting minutes. Stanton also brought pride to the agency as the Spina Bifida Camp coordinator. Her accomplishments will be missed at ASCC.

"It will be difficult to replace Mary Jo and the many talents and skills she possesses. She has been the anchor in our office for many years. She will be greatly missed at ASCC." commented Executive Director Patti Rogers.

## EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER

### ASCC Honors Cindy Baker as Employee of the Quarter

Cindy Baker, ASCC payroll Administration Specialist III, has shown exemplary dedication. She has demonstrated strong work ethics well beyond the call of her standard responsibilities for several months. Baker stepped-in and took on additional work to ensure implementation of tasks flowed smoothly throughout the agency.

By her placing a high standard to go above and beyond, Baker helped to orchestrate the flow of paperwork and reports; timely payments, and information accuracy to alleviate any delays in services to ASCC clients. Thank you for your service and dedication.



## Mamiya Moore Joins Staff in Magnolia



*Mamiya (Miya) Moore*

ASCC welcomes Mamiya Moore to the staff in the Magnolia office. Moore accepted responsibilities as an administrative specialist. She will provide support to case managers, Janet White and Ashley Barnes.

The Magnolia office provides services to the ASCC clients within a 17-county wide area.

Moore brings to the Spinal Cord Commission 10 years of experience in customer service and strong office skills. She also has experience from the local Magnolia newspaper.

Moore is a native of Magnolia, married and has three daughters, Myana, 15; Sh'kiya, 12; Sh'kayla, 9 years of age, and Fancy their dog. Miya is active in the community and serves as church clerk at the Spirit Lead Fellowship Church. She enjoys traveling, church and family activities.



## Calendar

### Reminders

**SPINA BIFIDA CAMP**  
June 15 - 20, 2014  
Deadline: May 15, 2014

**ASCF SCHOLARSHIPS**  
Submit Applications by:  
June 30, 2014

**ASCC CONFERENCE**  
September 26, 2014  
Save on Registration cost  
Early Bird Registration  
Begins: July 1, 2014  
(See more details on page 5)

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## Good to the Bone

Bone health is important for everyone as they get older and even more so for people with spinal-cord injury (SCI).

Following SCI, a person can lose anywhere from 30–50% of his or her bone mass and this usually occurs below the level of injury in the weightbearing bones of the hips, thighs and shins. These weakened bones can make a person more susceptible to osteoporosis and fractures.

Fractures can occur from typical injuries such as those sustained in car accidents or playing sports, but individuals with SCI are also at high risk for fragility fractures. These are low-trauma fractures that can occur when performing basic activities such as transfers, stretching, a fall from a wheelchair or even turning in bed.

When a person with SCI has a fracture he or she is susceptible to other serious health conditions such as pressure sores, blood clots, weight gain and further impairment of mobility.

The good news is there's plenty you can do to help keep your bones as strong and healthy as possible. Proper nutrition and following a good supplementation program can be a practical and cost-effective way to help reduce the risk of bone loss and developing osteoporosis.

### Food Not Supplements

Calcium is widely known as a key nutrient in bone health. Often, people are placed on calcium supplements to ensure they're reaching the daily minimum recommendation. However, research conducted by Cathy Craven, MD, and others at the University of Toronto show it may be better to get calcium from food sources as opposed to taking a supplement.

This is because the supplemental calcium may increase calcium blood levels too quickly and increase the risk of kidney stones, bladder stones and

cardiovascular disease.

Although dairy is often the go-to source for calcium, it can be very inflammatory to the body (people with SCI want to avoid inflammatory foods as they tend to cause pain and swelling all over the body) and often contains hormones and antibiotics.

Great alternative sources of calcium include broccoli, dark and leafy greens such as kale and collard greens, as well as salmon, almonds and walnuts.

Coffee, alcohol and salt can interfere with calcium absorption. If you're a coffee lover, you'll be pleased to know you need to drink about three or more cups of coffee before it'll start affecting calcium levels. Alcohol, however, not only interferes with calcium absorption, it can actually be toxic to bone cells.

Before supplementing with calcium, consult your health practitioner. It's best to take your calcium in the form of citrate or microcrystalline hydroxyapatite, which are very well absorbed in the body, and take it with food to maximize absorption. Beware of calcium carbonate, it may be inexpensive but has a poor absorption rate.

### Vitamins & Minerals

Magnesium is another key nutrient needed to help increase calcium absorption. It can reduce the risk of kidney stones and heterotrophic ossification.

Consuming magnesium-rich foods such as almonds, black beans, halibut, avocado and quinoa is a good start. Before supplementing with magnesium, consult your health practitioner.

The recommended supplement dose is between 400–800 milligrams a day and it's best to take it with a meal to maximize absorption. Magnesium has other benefits such as softening stools, improving sleep and reducing anxiety, muscle spasms and stress levels.

Vitamin D is also a big player for healthy bones because it helps the body absorb calcium.

Unfortunately, this vitamin is not found in abundance in our food supply.

Sources of vitamin D in foods include oily fish such as salmon and mackerel, egg yolks and fortified cereals and milks. The vitamin D our skin makes from the sun has a longer life cycle in the body than vitamin D from food, but this can also be tough to get if you live in colder climates.

Vitamin D is best to be taken in supplement form, although dosages will be dependent on age, skin pigmentation, geographical location, lifestyle, season and blood work. Consult your health practitioner about the right dosage for you.

### Drop the Soda Pop

Boron is often overlooked, but is an important trace mineral that helps reduce calcium loss from the body. It also helps activate vitamin D and estrogen which are needed to maintain healthy bones. Foods high in boron include almonds, avocados, red apples and bananas.

Incorporating bone-boosting herbs such as rosemary, thyme and sage into your meals can help inhibit the breakdown of bone. Consuming foods high in silica such as bananas, beans, raisins and carrots help absorb calcium and increase your bones' strength and integrity.

Important items to take out of your diet are soda pop and other sparkling beverages. The phosphorous levels in these drinks are extremely high and contain no calcium. The high phosphorous levels in soda pop can cause your body to lose calcium.

Incorporating these nutritional recommendations into your daily diet can help ensure you have healthy, strong bones and reduce your risk of osteoporosis.

For more information, visit [eatwelllivewellwithsci.com](http://eatwelllivewellwithsci.com).

Kylie James and Joanne Smith are co-authors of the book *Eat Well Live Well with SCI and Other Neurological Conditions*.

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# CLIENT SPOTLIGHT



Sherice Smith  
Little Rock, AR

**What is your level of injury or diagnosis?**

*I have Spina Bifida, and I'm paralyzed from the waist down.*

**Where do you work?**

*The Arkansas Minority Health Commission.*

**What type of job do you have?**

*I'm an In Person Assister that's licensed and trained to enroll Arkansans' into the Affordable Care Act.*

**How long have you worked at this job?**

*Since August 2013.*

**What do you enjoy most about the job?**

*The best thing about enrolling people is that you get to assist them in getting insurance they couldn't get previously.*

**What do you enjoy least about the job?**

*Not being able to reach people.*

**What accommodations does your employer provide?**

*Nothing major really. I am however able to do everything on the computer since I have difficulty with my hands.*

**How do you benefit by being employed?**

*It gives me a sense of pride to go out and pay hard earned cash for things I want and need (in my budget) without waiting on the system to hand it to me.*

**What made you decide to go back to work?**

*When I left my last job I continually looked for another job so it was just waiting for the right opportunity to come knocking.*

**How much support do your coworkers provide?**

*Too many to count! They are eager to assistance me anyway possible, whether it's picking something off the floor, getting me coffee or food, pushing my chair when I'm having a bad day or just telling me to keep up the good work. Never underestimate the power of affirmation!*

**What are your future goals?**

*I want to be financially independent and find new ways to dispel my creative energy.*

**What is the most positive benefit since starting work?**

*I feel like I matter, I feel I now have a purpose.*

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