



# Spinal Connection

Quality of life publication for Arkansans living well

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From the Director

Terra Patrom

## Spinal Connection

Spinal Connection is published quarterly by the Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission.

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Spinal Connection is an official publication of



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## Giving Thanks & Looking Forward

As we work through the closing of my 1st year as the Executive Director for the Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission, I wanted to look back and give thanks to the many past Commissioners of the Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission. These Commissioners work behind the scene of what drives ASCC to the forefront. They discuss needed changes, fight for and against laws, and contact legislators that will help you as a recipient of services. There have been many faces that represented this Agency from a Commission standpoint through the years. Many faces I remember, some I do not, some I can place the name but not the face. Many Commissioners through the 42 years of ASCC existence have made great strides, some are reserved and quiet, some speak when necessary.

The point is they speak for you as a person receiving services from this Agency. As we look toward the future of ASCC, our current Commissioners and staff want to hear your voice. A

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## Donations

The Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission accepts tax-deductible donations to support ASCC.

Send your donation to:  
 AR Spinal Cord Commission  
 1501 North University Ave.,  
 Suite 470  
 Little Rock, AR 72207

## Memorial Donations

The ASCC would like to acknowledge the following individuals for donations made to the Commission in memory of Rodney Brian Wood of Cabot, AR.

- Marlene and Robert Gross
- Hattie Mae Jenkins

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survey will be sent in the next couple months to a random sample of clients. This is the time for your voice to be heard by the Commissioners and staff of ASCC. The survey is very important to help us look to policy changes, healthcare initiatives, and directions that affect your daily living needs and independence. I hope all of you that receive the survey will take the time to let your voice be heard - good, bad or indifferent. It does matter and it does make a difference; it is your voice.

Speaking of daily living needs and independence, don't forget, it is Spina Bifida Camp application time. This year, camp will be the week of June 18- 23, 2017. This is a prime opportunity for kids between the ages of 6-16 to learn and/or enhance their independence, learn their daily living needs, and have a voice they can share with other kids with similar experiences. It is a great week of learning, experimenting, and networking so they can develop that voice, their voice. I encourage all to attend!

As I close, I would like to extend a heart felt THANK YOU to Jon Wilkerson, whose tenure as an ASCC Commissioner is coming to an end. Because of you, I have developed a greater understanding of continued passion and drive for selflessness. I bid you adieu knowing you will continue to fight the good fight!

Save the Date!

Spina Bifida Camp  
 June 18-23, 2017  
 Kids ages 6-16

## New Staff at ASCC

### Myranda Rowe

Myranda Rowe joined our Little Rock Case Management Office in February. Myranda has 6 years of experience working with persons with disabilities. She has previously worked as a Family Service Worker for the Department of Children and Family Services at DHS and as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor at the Arkansas Career Training Institute (ACTI). Myranda



has a Master of Arts degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC). Myranda has two Goddaughters that she enjoys spending time with and is active in supporting them with their cheerleading functions and soccer games. Myranda likes to run to remain physically fit and enjoys a good hike up Pinnacle Mountain in Pinnacle Mountain State Park. She also enjoys art and likes to paint, favoring the abstract style. When you meet Myranda you might ask her about her trip to Thailand last summer. Please join me in welcoming Myranda Rowe to our ASCC family.

## Tina Smith

Tina Smith joined our Central Administration Office in Little Rock in February. Tina comes to us with over 15 years of Administrative and Fiscal Support experience. Tina has a Bachelor of Science degree in Social Work from Arkansas Baptist College and is working on her Master of Science degree in Human Resource Management. Tina is engaged to be married and will be a newlywed by the time this article is printed. Between Tina and her new husband, they have six children - three boys and three girls. Tina fondly refers to her family as the “Brady Bunch.” Tina likes to read, sew, and cook. She loves people, loves a good cup of coffee, and is very compassionate toward others. Please join me in welcoming Tina Smith to our ASCC family.



## Medically Speaking

Thomas Kiser, MD

# Preventing Respiratory Complications in Spinal Cord Injuries

Respiratory complications are the number one cause of death in people with spinal cord injuries (SCI), so good pulmonary management is really important. The higher the level of spinal cord injury, the greater the risk of pulmonary complications due to a weaker cough, retention of lung secretions and less lung expansion with routine breathing. Other risk factors that predispose someone with SCI to respiratory dysfunction are cigarette smoking, history of a chest injury or chest surgery, and asthma. Normal respiratory function requires the coordinated action of multiple inspiratory and expiratory muscle groups. The brainstem sends signals to these muscles via descending motor signals from ventilator centers in the brainstem to spinal motor neuron pools in the cervical, thoracic and lumbar spinal cord, therefore injury at nearly any level of the spinal cord can result in some type of respiratory impairment. The expected respiratory dysfunction seen at different levels of SCI are as follows:



- L1 or lower level of SCI – minimal dysfunction due to weakened cough;

- T5-T12 SCI – intercostal (muscles between the ribs) and abdominal muscles are weakened, resulting in a weakened inspiration and cough;
- T1-T5 SCI – intercostals are even more weakened resulting in a weak cough. Quiet respiration is reduced due to decreased abdominal tone and loss of optimal diaphragm positioning;
- C4-8 SCI – expiration is by passive recoil of the rib cage and the diaphragm may have some weakness. Initially most people will need to be on a ventilator, but the majority will eventually be able to breath on their own. Vigorous preventive measures are needed at the time of injury to avoid progressive respiratory insufficiency. The ability to take a big breath is reduced by 1/2 with a C5 SCI, and it is reduced by 1/3 with a C8 SCI. Below C8 the reduction is minimal, but the cough is still weakened because of the loss of intercostal muscle strength and abdominal strength.

Here are a few things you can do to minimize your risks:

1. Keep your vaccinations up to date, especially the influenza and pneumococcal vaccines, because these are the best prevention tools available to manage difficult to treat infections. The influenza vaccine is recommended yearly and the pneumococcal vaccine is recommended at the time of injury, then repeated no more often than every 5 years but at least again at age 65. There are now two pneumococcal vaccines, the 13-valent pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV13) and the 23-valent pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPSV23), and it is important to discuss the timing of these two vaccines with your physician. The flu vaccination is safe if you have not suffered from Guillain Barre Syndrome in the past and if you have no allergies to the vaccine. Studies show there are no differences in the immune responses to these vaccines when comparing SCI to non-SCI subjects.
2. Do not smoke cigarettes, cigars, or marijuana. If you choose to use marijuana, using a vapor technique is much safer than inhaling marijuana smoke into your lungs.
3. Treat your asthma or any respiratory problems aggressively to clear secretions and avoid secondary problems. Ask your doctor if you need daily preventive treatments, especially if you are experiencing asthma symptoms that require the use of "as needed" medication more than twice a week.

## If You Believe You Can, You Can

Motivational Memo

Grover Evans, Ph.D.

Hello, I can't tell you how excited I am in writing for the Spinal Connection newsletter. As a former commissioner and Chairman, I do understand the need for change and a new ATTITUDE. You know we talk about change being positive, but do we really believe it? Well, a wonderful new year is upon us and like each year, a new chance for change. "A successful man is one who can lay a firm foundation with the bricks others have thrown at him" said David Brinkley, Television Journalist.

Probably the most notable display others will see from you is the new positive attitude you have in the way you approach the tragedies of life head on. Most people would have been crushed, but not you. If you

desire to be an effective leader, and all of you in the Spinal Cord family are leaders, having a positive attitude is essential.

I really want you to begin the New Year off as an OPTIMIST, with the tools to enable you to be the very best person you can be. WHY? It will determine your level of contentment as a person, but it also has an impact on how others interact with you. So, shall we begin:

**YOUR ATTITUDE IS A CHOICE**

Many of you know I am a public speaker. With that, the average person wants to wait for someone else to motivate him. WHY? He perceives that his circumstances are responsible for the way he thinks. But which comes first, the attitude or the circumstances? That’s really a “the chicken or the egg” kind of question. The truth is that it doesn’t matter which came first. No matter what happened to you yesterday, your attitude is your choice today.

**YOUR ATTITUDE DETERMINES YOUR ACTIONS**

Being a three time Paralympic Swimmer and holder of 11 World Records, “the winner’s edge is not in a gifted birth, a high IQ, or in talent. The winner’s edge is all in the attitude, not aptitude. Attitude is the criterion for success” (Denis Waitley). Your attitude is crucial because it determines how you act.

**YOUR CO-WORKERS ARE A MIRROR OF YOUR ATTITUDE**

I am constantly amazed, by individuals who display poor attitude while they expect others to be upbeat. The Law of Magnetism really is true: WHO YOU ARE IS WHO YOU ATTRACT. “If the only thing we leave our children is the quality of enthusiasm, we will have given them an estate of incalculable value” (Grover Evans). My parents didn’t have much, but the wealth they gave me, no one will ever be able to take that away from me.

**REFLECTING ON IT**

Martyn Lloyd-Jones, an English heart surgeon, stated “most unhappiness in life is due to the fact that we listen to

**Our sincere condolences to the friends and family of...**

- Amy M. Hall - May. 14, 2015
- William Cecil Murphree - Dec. 03, 2015
- Rosa Amelia Esquivel - Jan. 01, 2016
- Carolyn Joyce Sellars - Jan. 16, 2016
- Lillie Mae Henderson - Apr. 15, 2016
- Eneree M. Sockwell - Jul. 02, 2016
- Billy Doug Thornberry - Aug. 10, 2016
- Dennis Lee Lemonds - Sep. 08, 2016
- Nicholas Shane Williams - Sep. 12, 2016
- Donald Phillips - Oct. 05, 2016
- Shawn P. Brown - Oct. 08, 2016
- Merten Jabben - Oct. 09, 2016
- Phillip Apple - Oct. 11, 2016
- Joe Russell Stanage - Oct. 20, 2016
- Gerald Gene Glover - Nov. 03, 2016
- Joyce Sanders Thomas - Nov. 04, 2016
- Clarabell Smith - Nov. 05, 2016
- Odis Henry Tyson - Nov. 07, 2016
- Cassandra Lynn Collier - Nov. 13, 2016
- Daniel Eugene Goodwin - Nov. 21, 2016
- George Mackey Fosnaught - Nov. 30, 2016
- Jean Hardin - Dec. 03, 2016
- Robert Richard Cranford Jr. - Dec. 06, 2016
- Grant E. Marshall - Dec. 07, 2016
- Ruby Jeanette Rea - Dec. 12, 2016
- David Coleman - Dec. 18, 2016
- Vernon Mark Barnes - Dec. 18, 2016
- Daniel J. Woods - Dec. 21, 2016
- Ginger Annette Garren - Dec. 24, 2016
- Charlotte Marie Smith - Dec. 28, 2016
- John Doug Knight - Jan. 01, 2017
- Arthur G. Applegate - Jan. 03, 2017
- Malinda Dean Benoit - Jan. 06, 2017
- Krista Denise Barker - Jan. 07, 2017
- Anetta Eudy - Jan. 11, 2017
- Margaret Elizabeth Reveley - Jan. 15, 2017
- David Louis Ward - Jan. 28, 2017
- Sharon Kekaha - Jan. 28, 2017
- Bettye Sue Durnal - Feb. 04, 2017
- James Hinton - Feb. 08, 2017
- Michael Dean Freeman - Feb. 09, 2017
- Pippa S. Lewis - Feb. 18, 2017
- Freddie Lee Washington - Feb. 22, 2017
- Imogene Smith - Feb. 28, 2017
- Burnett S. Veasy - Feb. 28, 2017
- Denise Lynn Smith - Mar. 06, 2017
- Phyllis A. McKnight - Mar. 08, 2017
- Chris Cloar Brazil - Mar. 27, 2017

ourselves rather than talking to yourself.” What kind of voices do you hear? When you meet people, do you tell yourself they’ll let you down? When you face new experiences, does a voice in your head say you’re going to fail? If you’re hearing negative messages, you need to learn to give yourself positive mental pep talks. The best way to retain your attitude is to prevent your mind from going down any negative forks in the road.

**TO IMPROVE YOUR ATTITUDE, DO THE FOLLOWING:**

**FEED YOURSELF THE RIGHT “FOOD.”** If you’ve been starved of anything positive, then you need to start feeding yourself a regular diet of motivational material. Read books that encourage a positive attitude. Listen to motivational tapes. The more negative you are, the longer it will take to turn your attitude around. But if you consume a steady diet of the right “food,” you can become a positive thinker.

**ACHIEVE A GOAL EVERY DAY.** Okay, you don’t believe it can happen. Well, some people get into a rut of negativity because they feel they’re not making progress. If that describes you, begin setting achievable daily goals for yourself. A pattern of positive achievement will help you develop a pattern of positive thinking.

**WRITE IT ON YOUR WALL.** We all need reminders to help us keep thinking right. Alex Haley used to keep a picture in his office of a turtle on a fence post to remind him that everybody needed the help of others. As incentive, people put up awards they’ve won, inspirational posters, or letters they’ve received. Find something that will work for you and put it on your wall. I have a number of things on my wall but one I read a dozen times a day is **HUMILITY SPELLS SUCCESS.** My mother once said, “it doesn’t matter how much you have or how many World Records you set in swimming if you don’t help your brother or sister.”

Yes, I am a World Class swimmer, even at my age, ninth in the World, number one in the United States and Pan-American. I say this because if the mind is strong, you can do almost anything you want. Is your mind “conditioned” to win the key points ahead of you? Until next time, make it a grand day.

**Have a medical question?**

**Experiencing issues and need immediate answers?**

**TRIUMPH  
Help Line**

**FREE**

**24 / 7 Access**

**1-855-767-6983**

**Help & Information  
for Arkansans with  
Spinal Cord Injury &  
Healthcare Providers**



## Spina Bifida Camp

Summer is approaching fast and Spina Bifida Camp will soon be here. This year's camp is June 18th through June 23rd, and the deadline to register has been extended to May 15. With only 40 openings, acceptance is on a first-come, first-served basis so register early! This week-long residential camp, located at Camp Aldersgate in Little Rock, is open to ASCC clients ages 6 to 16 with any type of spinal cord disability. There is no fee to attend. Camp activities include: campfires, canoeing, fishing, arts and crafts, and swimming. For those wanting more of a challenge at camp, there are activities like SCUBA diving, adapted archery, and an accessible adventure challenge rope course. Applications and brochures were mailed out in March. If you have questions or would like an application, call Brad Caviness at 501-296-1788 or 1-800-459-1517 or send an email to [brad.caviness@arkansas.gov](mailto:brad.caviness@arkansas.gov).



## Support Groups in Arkansas

*Meet, encourage, and be encouraged by others in your community who are facing similar challenges.*

### Groups Open to All Individuals

Northwest Arkansas Disability Connections Group:  
This group meets quarterly in Springdale, AR. Contact Susie Hook at (479) 521-1463 for more information.

Cross Disability Adult Support Group:  
This group meets at 4:00pm every Monday night at Skull Creek Apartments, 2619 N. Quality Lane, Fayetteville, AR. Contact Freddy Honeycutt at (479) 442-5600.



### SCI Groups

Russellville, AR: Typically meets on the 3rd Friday of the month at 2:00pm. Location and time may vary. Contact Lorie Hamilton at (479) 356-1118 for more information.

Sherwood, AR: Meetings held on the 3rd Thursday of every month (except December) at 11:30am at St. Vincent Health. Meetings are generally held in the cafeteria on the rehab side. Call Doug Fish at (501) 296-1792 to verify the location.

Potential Support Group: If you are interested in a support group in the following counties (Garland, Hot Spring, Pike, or Montgomery), call Mona Ungefug at 501-701-6591.

Visit [atrp.ar.gov/support-groups](http://atrp.ar.gov/support-groups) for more support groups, including those for caregivers, traumatic brain injury survivors, and limb loss survivors.



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## ASCF Van Donations

The Arkansas Spinal Cord Foundation occasionally has vans donated to their organization. Interested applicants should visit <http://gg.gg/ascfvan> to access the application form online. For more information, call Mandy Carmack at (501) 247-1977 or email [mandy@asilr.com](mailto:mandy@asilr.com).

