

# Momentum.

Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital Foundation Newsletter

Volume 14 / Fall 2017

Mary Free Bed<sup>®</sup>  
Rehabilitation Hospital Foundation

**B**en Vereen is a legendary singer, dancer and actor known for his razzle-dazzle smile and bigger-than-life personality. But when he visits Grand Rapids in November, his appearance will be less about entertaining and more about spreading a message of hope.

Vereen is the special guest at the fourth annual Mary Free Bed Foundation Gala Nov. 2 at DeVos Place in Grand Rapids – and he can't wait.

"I'll bring the joy," he said. "We'll have a wonderful time."

Guests can expect to hear stories from Vereen's stellar 50-plus year career spanning stage and screen. A Tony Award-winner for his performance in "Pippin," Vereen's versatile range of performances includes "Wicked" and "Hair" on Broadway, the big screen's "All That Jazz" and TV's acclaimed miniseries "Roots," among scores of others. The tireless 70-year-old song-and-dance man also presents masterclasses and lectures, and appears in concert all over the world.

Vereen's appearance at the foundation gala will feature some songs, a little dance and a great deal of inspiration. That's because, a few years ago, he didn't know if he would ever sing or dance again.

In 1992, Vereen was walking along the Pacific Coast Highway near his home in Malibu, Calif., when he was struck by a car. He sustained multiple critical injuries and was hospitalized for several weeks before transferring to the Kessler Institute, a rehabilitation hospital in West Orange, N.J., near where he had a second home.

*Continued on page 7*

**TONY-WINNER BEN VEREEN  
IS COMING TO DINNER FOR ...**

*'hope, freedom  
and all that jazz'*



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Nov. 2**  
**Mary Free Bed Foundation Gala**  
**featuring Tony Award-winner Ben Vereen**  
DeVos Place

**Nov. 4-5**  
**Keep Up the Pace**  
**Junior Pacers Wheelchair Basketball Tournament**  
Mary Free Bed YMCA

**Dec. 2-3**  
**Mary Free Bed Invitational Pacers Wheelchair**  
**Basketball Tournament**  
Mary Free Bed YMCA

## TIM ARTER ELECTED CHAIR OF FOUNDATION BOARD

Community advocate Tim Arter has been elected chair of the Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital Foundation Board.

"Tim is a longtime supporter and advocate of Mary Free Bed," said Tim Pietryga, vice president of Advancement. "We look forward to his leadership and vision."



Tim, a partner with Brickley DeLong, an accounting firm with offices in Grand Haven, Grand Rapids, Hart and Muskegon, has served

as a trustee since 2013. He's also served on several community boards and as a volunteer for civic, community, youth soccer and service organizations.

Tim and his wife, Cheryl, have three adult children who live with their families in West Michigan. Mary Free Bed significantly touched their lives with the care and resources their daughter received for a traumatic brain injury from a 2004 vehicle accident.

Two new trustees were elected to the board this year: Carol Springer, president of the Mary Free Bed Guild, and Dr. Chris VandenBerg, medical director of Mary Free Bed's Betty Bloomer Ford Cancer Rehabilitation Program. Molly Krauss was elected to her second three-year term.

The Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital Foundation, established in October 2012, is a charitable 501(c)3 organization created to raise funds for capital, expansion and program improvements for the hospital. Members advocate for the hospital's mission, foster relationships with donors and work with the community to ensure Mary Free Bed's future is as compelling as its past.

### Following is a complete list of all board members:

Chairman of the Board  
*Timothy D. Arter*

President  
*Kent Riddle*

Treasurer  
*Randall DeNeff*

Secretary  
*Timothy J. Pietryga*

Trustees  
*Gregory Conway*  
*Eva Aguirre Cooper*  
*Jocelyn Dettloff*  
*Darrow Goodspeed*  
*Janet Haynes*  
*Dr. Michael Jakubowski*  
*Molly Krauss*  
*Lee Perez*  
*Kim Ridings*  
*Carol Springer*  
*Dr. Chris VandenBerg*  
*Diane Vander Maas*

## INSIDE MARY FREE BED



## MARY FREE BED STROKE STUDY AIMS TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES

Efforts to provide greater independence and mobility for people recovering from a stroke are behind a multi-center study by researchers and clinicians from Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital, Indiana University, and the Shirley Ryan AbilityLab, formerly the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago.

The five-year research study, funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research, is assessing whether high-intensity gait training improves walking function after stroke. The study, in its third year, so far has included about 250 participants at Mary Free Bed.

"The goal is to identify specific rehabilitation protocols to facilitate better, faster recovery," said Roberta Virva, manager of Clinical Research in the Center for Research & Innovation. Other Mary Free Bed staff on the study team include principal investigator Dr. John F. Butzer, physical therapist Lauren Lenca and research assistant Ariel Lugo.

It's not just the study personnel who make the research possible.

"It's a team effort," Virva said, crediting nursing staff, rehab techs, occupational, speech-language and physical therapists, and inpatient schedulers. "It takes everyone on the floor to make this work."

Most patients in the Inpatient Stroke Program are eligible for high-intensity walking training. Patients admitted to the program engage in intense and varied walking practice four days a week and up to 60 minutes a session. Patients at a lower functional level safely participate by using a treadmill, harness system or with extra support from an additional research assistant or rehab tech.

Data is collected from heart rate monitors, pedometers and a patient's rate of perceived exertion. Researchers use three assessments of balance and walking to help measure outcomes of intense training: the Berg Balance Scale, a 10-meter walk test and a six-minute walk test. Participants are monitored every week.

These measures also have been implemented as standard-of-care assessments for patients in the Inpatient Brain Injury, Day Rehab and Sub-Acute Rehabilitation programs. While this is separate from the study, it's part of an organization-wide initiative to standardize the measurement of patient outcomes and establish common metrics across the Mary Free Bed care continuum.

Dr. Benjamin Bruinsma, medical director of the Inpatient Stroke Program, and Steve Brodnicki, program director, also have been critical to success of the study.

"We as a team are always looking at ways to improve our patients' function and independence," Bruinsma said.

Researchers hope to determine how to most effectively and consistently use high-intensity gait training to optimize patients' post-stroke walking ability, speed and endurance, and standing balance. Improved walking ability enables stroke survivors to reintegrate more easily into the community.

The study also has impact beyond stroke rehabilitation, because it affirms Mary Free Bed's dedication to research and use of evidence-based practices in all areas of care. Virva said researchers and clinicians are focused on developing protocols to "put knowledge into action."



# WHEELCHAIR & ADAPTIVE SPORTS

## JUNIOR WHEELCHAIR SPORTS CAMP PROMOTES CAMARADERIE, COMPETITION

Fifty campers – including 14 new faces – participated in Mary Free Bed's annual Junior Wheelchair Sports Camp at Grand Valley State University in Allendale. The free, week-long event introduces children and teens with physical disabilities who require the use of a wheelchair to a variety of sports and connects them with kids who face similar challenges.

Campers ages 7 to 18 from across Michigan, Indiana and Ohio tried basketball, cheer, cycling, dodgeball, football, Frisbee golf, handball, kayaking, lacrosse, sled hockey, softball, swimming and tennis. New this year to the expansive roster of sports was lacrosse.

Mary Free Bed's Wheelchair & Adaptive Sports program hosts the event, the only wheelchair sports camp in Michigan. Held July 24-28, activities featured a Hawaiian-themed dance and a water fight with the Allendale Fire Department. The week culminated with an awards luncheon that included a bike from Airway Oxygen, a hockey sled from Mobility Sports, a medical chair from CareLinc and a sports chair from Per4Max.

WAS is one of the largest programs of its kind in the United States, serving more than 700 people each year through competitive teams, clinics and classes. Junior Wheelchair Sports Camp is staffed by dozens of volunteers and instructors, some of whom are former campers.



### 2017 JUNIOR WHEELCHAIR SPORTS CAMP SPONSORS:

*Airway Oxygen, Inc.*

*Bill & Paul's Sporthaus*

*CareLinc*

*Fusion Medical*

*Kentwood Parks & Recreation*

*Mary Free Bed Guild*

*Mobility Sports*

*Per4Max*

*Saladin Shriners*





## GIFTS & GRANTS

The Mary Free Bed Foundation is privileged to partner with grant-making organizations and corporations. A few recent highlights:

### **Thome grant sets Driver Rehabilitation program expansion into motion**

A \$50,000 grant from the Edward N. and Della L. Thome Memorial Foundation will help expand Mary Free Bed's Driver Rehabilitation Program. The generous gift will be used toward purchase of a clinical driving simulator that provides a safe environment to be reintroduced to driving.

With the addition of this state-of-the-art piece of equipment, Mary Free Bed will be able to serve more patients and be the only comprehensive, driver rehabilitation program in Michigan that offers a combination of simulation and on-road assessment.

### **2017 Reeds Lake Triathlon brings on new partner to raise money for Foundation**

Founders Brewing Co. joined the Rhoades McKee Reeds Lake Triathlon and Duathlon as the Post-Race Celebration sponsor, a new element to the annual September event that benefits the Mary Free Bed Foundation. Proceeds from refreshment sales at the celebration for athletes and spectators over 21 went directly to the foundation.

"We are delighted to help support this exciting annual East Grand Rapids event and to help support the good work that Mary Free Bed Hospital provides," said co-founder and president Dave Engbers.

The foundation also received generous support from:

- *AdvisaCare*
- *Gazelle Sports Foundation*
- *Integrity Back & Brain*
- *Spartan Medical Supply*
- *Steve and Kathryn Bandstra Foundation*
- *United States Tennis Association*
- *Walmart Foundation*
- *West Michigan Sports Commission*
- *Wolverine World Wide*

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE



### **REEVE FOUNDATION GRANT ADDS BIKE TO FLEET, CREATES STATE'S ONLY OFF-ROAD ADAPTIVE HANDCYCLE PROGRAM**

A \$10,000 Quality of Life grant from the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation has allowed Mary Free Bed to help people with disabilities go places that, until now, were inaccessible.

The grant was used to purchase an Explorer III Off-Road Handcycle to add an off-road handcycling component to Mary Free Bed's Wheelchair & Adaptive Sports offerings. It also will be used by patients in the hospital's inpatient and outpatient programs for recreational therapy.

"This specialized equipment provides yet another way to help people living with paralysis to overcome obstacles," said Maria Besta, manager of Recreational Therapy and Wheelchair & Adaptive Sports. "We're honored to receive this award and so thankful to the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation for its generous gift."

No other hospital or organization in Michigan offers an adaptive program that enables people with disabilities to ride bikes on non-paved roads and trails, Besta said. Mary Free Bed kicked off the program with a series of clinics in August at Luton Park in Rockford.

Hundreds of people of all ages are expected to utilize the bike, either as a therapy tool in the hospital or as part of the off-road handcycle program, said recreational therapist and coordinator Mike Burkhart. Due to high demand, he hopes to add one or two more bikes in the near future.

"This bike enables people with limited or no lower-body mobility to tackle single-track terrain, something that would otherwise be impossible," Burkhart said. "It can engage, challenge and empower people."

The award is one of 102 grants totaling \$721,425 presented this year by the Reeve Foundation to nonprofit organizations nationwide that provide more opportunities, access and daily quality of life for people living with paralysis, their families and caregivers. Conceived by the late Dana Reeve, the program has awarded more than 2,900 grants totaling over \$20 million since 1999.

# MARY FREE BED MOMENT



## *'We were looking for hope'*

### CHARLOTTE MAKES GREAT GAINS WITH OUTPATIENT PEDIATRIC REHABILITATION

Charlotte Hendricks was born on Thanksgiving Day in 2015 to Kristine and Matt Hendricks. Her entry into the world was a traumatic one, but her parents are confident Charlotte's strong will is part of why she's made amazing progress, along with several weeks of outpatient occupational and physical therapy at Mary Free Bed.

"Charlotte's personal goals are to conquer opening baby gates and empty every kitchen cupboard before getting caught," Kristine said. "As her parents, we want Charlotte to know she can accomplish anything she sets her mind to."

Kristine shares her story here:

*I remember everything about my daughter's birth and the moments leading up to it. At 38 weeks pregnant, my water broke. It was the evening before Thanksgiving, and I was carrying the laundry upstairs. I excitedly called my husband and told him it was time. The hospital bag had been packed for more than 10 weeks. I attended birthing classes and truly felt like we had done everything to prepare to meet our baby.*

*We had waited for this moment for what seemed like forever. Getting pregnant was not easy, and we eventually turned to in vitro fertilization. Our IVF cycle had given us only one embryo. ONE. The doctors told us our odds were not great, only 10 percent. That's*

*when I knew our baby was a fighter. We found out a few weeks later we were pregnant and spent the next nine months preparing to meet our miracle!*

*Unfortunately, labor and delivery were not what we had hoped for. I progressed slowly, and eventually a C-section was performed. I immediately knew something was wrong. I waited to hear her cry, but the room was silent. Our baby was struggling to breathe. She was immediately intubated and taken to the NICU. We later learned she had fluid in her lungs.*

*I have replayed every minute of those 29 hours of labor over and over in my mind. What should I have done differently? What went wrong? And while we will never have clear answers to these questions, we did finally get to meet and hold our Thanksgiving miracle, Charlotte Grace, all 7 pounds, 4 ounces of her!*

*Charlotte recovered quickly and was discharged from the hospital five days later.*

*When Charlotte was six months old, we were devastated to learn she had suffered permanent brain damage as a result of her traumatic birth.*

*Charlotte was diagnosed with peri-ventricular leukomalacia. Children with PVL have difficulty with gross motor development, often leading to a diagnosis of cerebral palsy. Her form of CP manifested as an especially high and constant tightness or stiffness in the*

*muscles on her right side, mostly affecting her right leg and foot.*

*I firmly believe in the importance of early intervention. We wanted to do everything we could to help Charlotte, and we wanted the best. Mary Free Bed has been one of the best decisions we have ever made.*

*When we started physical and occupational therapy here, Charlotte could barely sit unassisted. We were desperately looking for help, and Mary Free Bed has provided us with the tools to help Charlotte be successful.*

*I am so appreciative of the extra care and attention our therapists offered throughout this process. They taught me how to effectively work with Charlotte on sitting, crawling, standing and walking – all while answering every question and letting me know what our next step would be. Charlotte is now 17 months old and is sitting, crawling and standing independently. And it won't be long before she is walking on her own! We believe having Charlotte in therapy at such an early age made a big difference.*

*It is difficult to express how thankful I am to find Mary Free Bed. The help and constant support has set Charlotte on a path to success so she will be able to accomplish anything she wants to. It is more than we could have ever hoped for, and Mary Free Bed will always hold a special place in my heart.*



# STORIES THAT MOVE YOU

## BRANDON McELHENIE GETS 'STRONGER DAY BY DAY' AFTER CRASH

Brandon McElhenie couldn't wait to drive his new 2016 Yamaha YXZ1000R at Silver Lake Sand Dunes. A fan of cars, dirt bikes and ATVs since he was young, the 25-year-old Battle Creek resident was excited to take the side-by-side UTV (Utility Task Vehicle) for an off-road ride with friends.

Brandon, his girlfriend, Sara Roberts, and a group of friends headed for the dunes, located along Lake Michigan between Muskegon and Ludington, which attracts millions of visitors each year.

"It was April 8, the second weekend Silver Lake was open for the season," he said.

He was driving near the south flats when he jumped a small hill, and the vehicle became airborne and flipped end-over-end. The cage collapsed, and Brandon sustained three fractured vertebrae in his neck. He was airlifted to Spectrum Health Hospital in Grand Rapids, where he underwent surgery.

When Brandon came to Mary Free Bed on April 13, "I couldn't really do anything on my own," he said.

He participated in extensive rehabilitation and slowly progressed, gaining strength and learning to do things all over again with guidance from Dr. Sam Ho, medical director of Mary Free Bed's Spinal Cord Injury program, and his team of therapists and nurses. Support from Sara and their daughter, Anna, 3 – who stayed with Brandon in his room for the duration of this time – was his biggest motivation, he said. "At the end of the day, everything made us stronger," he said.

One of Brandon's main goals during his rehabilitation journey was to walk. And he did just that when he graduated July 20.

After a short break, Brandon returned to Mary Free Bed for outpatient therapy.

"My goal is to be able to functionally walk independently," he said.

Watch a video about Brandon's journey by visiting Mary Free Bed's Stories that Move You blog on [maryfreebed.com](http://maryfreebed.com).



## GUILD HIGHLIGHTS



## DISABILITY AND MINORITY SCHOLARSHIPS PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS

Dereck Chavis was a college track-and-field coach when his exposure to doctors and therapists working with his student-athletes ignited an interest in the medical field.

When his father developed leukemia, Dereck saw how important it is to have "good people around those in need." It was the catalyst that

inspired the 46-year-old to change careers. He earned a master's degree in Occupational Therapy from Davenport University in Grand Rapids, and was completing a 12-week clinical rotation at Mary Free Bed, where he worked with patients who have complex medical conditions, including cancer.

Dereck is among 12 students who received a Mary Free Bed Guild Scholarship to help pay for his studies during a June 7 ceremony.

The Guild established a minority scholarship program in 2006 to provide scholarships for students pursuing degrees in nursing, neuropsychology, orthotics, prosthetics and rehabilitation therapy programs. A second scholarship program for students with disabilities was created in 2015. In both cases, the Guild's goal is to promote academic achievement for outstanding students and hope they will consider Mary Free Bed when it's time to look for employment.

Nearly \$500,000 has been awarded over the past 11 years. Applications for the 2018-2019 scholarships will be accepted beginning in January. Call 616.840.8667 for more information.

*Continued from cover*

"There was a certain amount of fear. Where was I going? What was going to happen to me? Who are these people?" Vereen said. "When I was first introduced to physical and occupational therapy when I was at Kessler, I was frightened ... what I discovered is that we inspire one another. By being inspired by the therapists, we inspire them."

His prognosis unclear, Vereen spent several months in intensive rehabilitation.

"When I was going through my rebirth, I called my friend (entertainer) Chita Rivera and I said 'Chita, will I ever dance again? There was a long pause, and she said 'Yes, you'll dance again. But you'll dance differently - and Vive La Différence!'"

Vereen is the field of rehabilitation's biggest cheerleader, calling it "guiding the spirit to the ability where it can exist in a form that is chosen."

"We don't choose certain things in our lives to happen, but they happen," he said. "You catch us when we fall. You're there for the love and care that people need when they're broken."

Rehabilitation is physical, he said, but "it's the spiritual thing that helps us through."

"We may not like (what's happened to us), but we've got life," Vereen said. "And I try to be an example by living my life."

While he made a remarkable recovery, Vereen has continued therapy as needed over the years. He said he's helping Kessler start a wheelchair dancing component. He was excited to learn that Mary Free Bed's Wheelchair & Adaptive Sports Program offers a ballroom dancing class for people with disabilities.

"Our charge is to help each other through," Vereen said. "We encourage each other to go higher."

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## Event Details

The gala is the foundation's premiere fundraising event. Proceeds support programs, therapies and patient care that restore hope, freedom and independence.

The "ties and heels" event begins at 6 p.m. with a cocktail reception. Dinner will be served at 7 p.m., followed by the program at 8 p.m. Dancing will follow.

Individual tickets are \$200 per person; event sponsorship also is available. To purchase tickets, or reserve a sponsorship visit [www.maryfreebed.com/gala](http://www.maryfreebed.com/gala).

For additional information, contact Jocelyn Dettloff at 616.840.8204 or [jocelyn.dettloff@maryfreebed.com](mailto:jocelyn.dettloff@maryfreebed.com). The deadline to purchase tickets is Oct. 20.

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**Nov. 2 | 6 p.m. | DeVos Place**

We have a role for you at the fourth annual Mary Free Bed Foundation Gala.

Please mark your calendar to play a part in something big.

*All evening proceeds will support  
Mary Free Bed Pediatric Rehabilitation*

*Special Guest*

**Ben Vereen**

A Tony Award-winner for "Best Actor in a Musical" for his Broadway performance in *Pippin*, Ben Vereen will be the star of our musical, magical and "Mary" evening. With his own rehabilitation story to share and a versatile range of stage and screen performances, from *Wicked* and *Hair* on Broadway, to the big screen's *All that Jazz* and TV's *Roots*, the actor, dancer and singer is sure to bring all that pizzazz to the Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital Gala, too.

Restoring Hope and *Freedom*  
**Mary Free Bed**  
Rehabilitation Hospital Foundation

Sponsorship and tickets are available.  
Visit [MaryFreeBed.com/gala](http://MaryFreeBed.com/gala)

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**Mary Free Bed**  
— Gala —



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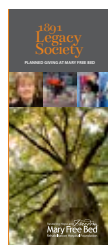
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# A MARY TOUR

## UPCOMING TOUR DATES

Join us for a tour of Mary Free Bed!  
Space is limited and reservations are required.  
Contact Sydne Di Cesare at 616.840.8137  
or foundation@maryfreebed.com.

**10 a.m. Nov. 15**

**8:30 a.m. Dec. 12**

**11 a.m. Jan. 17**

**11 a.m. Feb. 13**

*Additional 2018 dates to be scheduled.*