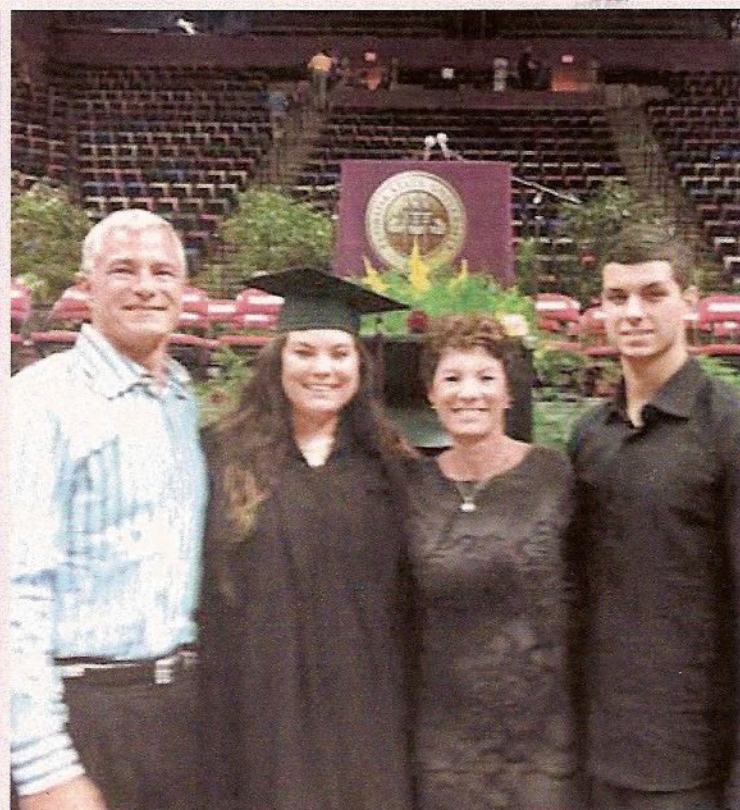
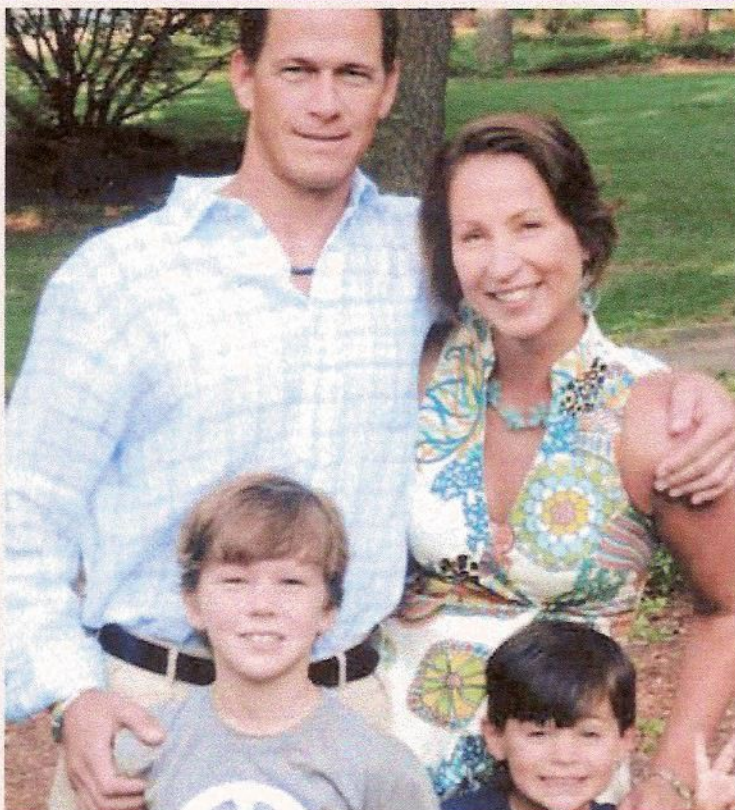


From Patients to Donors

Four families turn adversities into opportunities to give back.

BY RACHEL FRANCO



In talking to patients of Shepherd Center and their families, one hears a common theme: At Shepherd, miracles happen. Four families – bonded together by their desire to help others experience a miracle, as well – share their stories below.

It's the phone call that every parent dreads and that Rae Stone of Middleburg, Va., received on Jan. 14, 2011 at 5:10 p.m. Her 18-year-old son, Forrest, had collided into a fence while he was snowboarding at Bryce Resort in Basye, Va., and was unconscious. Through tears and terror, Rae and her husband, Kent Allen, and soon after, Forrest's older brother, Austin, rushed to UVA Medical Center, where Forrest was being treated for a severe brain injury. After 12 days in a coma, Forrest was stable enough to move on to rehabilitation.

As veterinarians who practice progressive medicine, Rae and Kent were determined to provide Forrest with the most progressive therapy available at Shepherd Center. While Forrest has experienced complications, he has made great strides because of the comprehensive physical, occupational and speech therapy he has received, his parents say. Grateful for the life-changing care provided by Shepherd, the family has used Forrest's blog to raise more than \$10,000 for

ory to Shepherd and hopes to do so annually. And, Julie's local SCI peer support group honored her love of fitness by subsidizing gym memberships for former Shepherd patients who otherwise could not afford them. "Shepherd has blessed our lives," Don says. "If Julie had had the opportunity to give back, I know this is what she would do."

Brian Marino of Hollywood, Fla., got the call on Aug. 13, 2010, about his wife, Anita, who had driven to Charleston, S.C., that day to attend a funeral. The stranger who stopped to help told Brian that Anita's car had been broadsided by an 18-wheeler. Brian and his children, Ali and Matt, immediately left for Memorial University Medical Center in Savannah, Ga., where, due to the severe traumatic brain injury Anita sustained, she was given only a 10 percent chance of survival. Between the doctors' care and Anita's fighting spirit, however, she was finally stabilized and able to transfer to Shepherd.

Anita progressed from limited to full participation in occupational, physical and speech therapy for six weeks as an inpatient and nine weeks as an outpatient at Shepherd Pathways. Today, while Anita struggles occasionally for words, she is doing very well physically. And, for this, Brian, Ali and Matt are incredibly grateful. In a blog Brian created to update family and friends on Anita's progress, he invited people to donate money to Shepherd's Brain Injury Program. To date, he's raised almost \$50,000. "We could not leave Shepherd without giving back," Brian says. "If there was anything we could do to make this care available to others, we had to help."

Toby Regal of Atlanta is grateful to have Shepherd right in his backyard. He received a call also, but his came from his neurologist asking Toby to see him immediately. Toby, who had sustained a previous brain injury, learned he had a lesion around his brain stem. After having it surgically removed in September 2009, Toby could not walk or talk. He went to Shepherd, where he underwent 10 days of physical and other types of therapy as an inpatient followed by two months of balance and equilibrium treatment at Shepherd Pathways. Today, he is 95 percent back to full health.

To thank Shepherd, Toby and his wife Kelly hosted a fundraiser at their home in May 2011 and raised about \$7,500. About 35 friends and colleagues attended, and all were amazed by the extraordinary work done at Shepherd. Toby also helps to expand awareness of the Center through his service on the Shepherd Center Foundation Advisory Board. "Shepherd was there for me when I really needed them. I can't imagine not giving back," Toby says.

It's safe to say the Allen-Stone, Hudson and Marino families feel the same way.

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TOBY REGAL, ATLANTA

brain injury research at both Shepherd Center and UVA. "Shepherd is a place where miracles happen," Rae says. "If we can help a miracle happen for someone else, that's really the greatest gift."

Don Hudson and his late wife, Julie, of Lexington, S.C., received that dreaded telephone call on Feb. 10, 2008. Their son, Mack, age 16 at the time, had been in a serious car accident. Doctors at Palmetto Health Richland, where Mack was taken, told Don and Julie that Mack had sustained an L-1 complete spinal cord injury (SCI) and would not walk again. Instructed to get Mack to rehabilitation, Don and Julie selected Shepherd Center, where Mack underwent extensive physical, occupational and recreational therapy as an inpatient and in the day program. Don and Julie also benefitted by taking classes on how to care for Mack.

Doing remarkably well now at age 20, Mack experienced another setback, the sudden death of his mother in February 2010. Subsequently, Don donated \$5,000 in his wife's mem-

Clockwise from Top Left: Forrest Allen and his family enjoy the Secret Garden during his Shepherd Center stay. Mack Hudson and his late mother, Julie Hudson, celebrate Mack's graduation from Shepherd. Anita Marino and her family enjoy her daughter's graduation day. Toby Regal and his wife lead busy lives with their two sons.