

March 10, 2004

Hello everyone,

Annie's outpatient therapy at Marion Joy Rehab Center will soon be coming to an end. The program is an on again off again one for brain injury patients. Her return to the program would commence in two months. Annie's family has not been as happy with the outpatient program as they were with the inpatient program. Annie's mother (77 years old) does not drive, thus they rely on Marion Joy's transportation a couple of times a week. Annie's appointment may be at 1 p.m., for example, and the bus picks them up at 10 a.m.. Then they have to wait for her appt. time. Then wait for the bus ride home. Her wheelchair is tied down while riding in the bus so that it is stable. However, two weeks ago, the attendant in the bus only tied the front of the wheelchair and not the back. Although her mother questioned it the attendant said Annie would be fine. The next block the wheelchair flipped and over she went on her head. Last week in therapy, the therapist left Annie sitting on the exercise table as she walked into the next room. Within a few seconds Annie fell off the table. The right side of her face is again swollen and bruised. Annie's mother was in the next room and heard her fall. This is why Annie's mother tirelessly tries to be next to Annie at all times. At least this time, no stitches required. As I have said in past emails, her muscles have atrophied, her sight is diminished, and she has very little balance.

Annie cannot be left alone. At home she is strapped in her wheelchair when sitting so she doesn't lose her balance and fall. She still thinks she can walk and wants to just do it. She can but only with assistance. This past Sunday, Annie broke into a sweat exercising with her ankle weights with me. I keep telling her she has to get stronger in order to be able to walk - then she said "Okay, let's do it again". Then swears at me a bit as it gets tough - but always with a smile. She loves our warm up - which is dancing across the living room. She is still so coordinated. She dances better than she walks. Likes to push her wheelchair instead of the walker because it is easier. I try to encourage using the walker.

In home physical and occupational therapy would be ideal for them. Annie's sister is researching the possibility. The costs will be higher but the benefits could be infinitely better. At Marion Joy she rarely has the same therapist each week. They really don't even know how she has improved from the week before.

For those of you who have received thank you notes from Annie, she has written or signed them herself. I have not gotten all the names from my banker yet so there are more thank you notes to follow. And please tell me if you have donated and do not receive a note. Annie's mother and sister do not want to forget anyone who is trying to help Annie.

I did get a laptop for Annie. She was able to type during a therapy session from dictation. Her sister and I will work with Annie this weekend. Perhaps, one of these days, she will surprise you with an email.

Linda