

Hope for Hyperbaric Healing

Out-of-state visitor is first participant in clinical trial in ACH's Wound Care and Hyperbarics department

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Participation in its first clinical trial has brought an out-of-state visitor to Alliance Community Hospital's Wound Care and Hyperbarics department.

Thomas Foster came to Alliance from New Jersey to be the first person in the study being sponsored by the International Hyperbaric Medical Foundation. Called Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy in Chronic Traumatic Brain Injury or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, the observational research study is testing the effects of hyperbaric oxygen on the brain in regards to memory and thinking ability.

Foster learned of the trial while searching online for a natural solution to the brain injury he has suffered from several concussions he has had during his lifetime. After applying for it at the beginning of 2013, he went through an interview process and was eventually accepted as the first participant at ACH, which is the only facility in Ohio to participate in the trial.

Foster, who arrived here in October and began his first hyperbaric treatments earlier this month, said he has had five concussions — four of them being so bad he was knocked unconscious.

The first was the result of a car accident when he a teenager. Several years later, he had a slip-and-fall accident at work, slamming his head on the ground and later awaking in a hospital. Another slip-and-fall accident came in his bathroom, when a wet floor resulted in a knock on the

head.

Foster recounted the most recent and severe concussions involved a mugging at a Philadelphia train station three years ago, from which he awoke in a hospital ICU, and a tumble down the stairs while trying to step over a cat last December, during which he landed on and split open his head.

"I've had my share (of concussions) and certainly I know the last two have really affected me in a cognitive way," he said.

Foster said after that last concussion, he was having vertigo and started to have cognitive issues. "I would really find myself just grasping for words and being forgetful," he explained. "People were picking up on it, too. People who were close to me were like, 'That's not like you.' And I was kind of just spacing out at times."

The trial involves 60-minute sessions five days a week in 20-session intervals, with testing in between. In all, Foster could end up having 80 sessions during his stay.

In the hopes that time in the hyperbaric oxygen chamber will help his cognitive issues, Foster has temporarily relocated to the area to do these sessions. "I kind of put myself in a situation where if I'm here for a year, then it's for the best," he said.

Foster, who is originally from Philadelphia, is staying in Sebring in a one-bedroom apartment he rents from a hospital employee. "It's a big change for me because I grew up in the big city, as they say. It's quiet compared to where I come from," he said. "It's



Review Photo/Kevin Graff

Thomas Foster, who has temporarily relocated to Sebring from New Jersey, stands next to the hyperbaric oxygen chamber in Alliance Community Hospital's Wound Care and Hyperbarics department. Foster, who has suffered from a number of severe concussions, is participating in a study on the effects of hyperbarics on traumatic brain injury.

funny, now since I've been down in Sebring, when I come up into Alliance it's like the big city up here. There's a Walmart."

Foster, who has been exploring the area and was surprised to see a castle in Alliance, said he likes the area, though he said he finds it funny when people comment on his accent because he didn't know he had one.

While most people who have to worry about chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) — a degenerative disease found in those with a history of multiple concussions or head injuries — are professional athletes such as football players or boxers, Foster is proof that ordinary people with a bit of bad luck can have their fair share of brain traumas as well.

"It's (CTE) actually some-

thing that they really haven't been able to diagnose concretely until an autopsy, so I really didn't want to wait until that point," Foster joked. "If there's anything that can help before that, that's what I want to do."

All joking aside, Foster knows how serious head injuries can be, which is why he went searching for a treatment option. "When you get knocked out, your brain literally slams so hard up against your skull that the wiring just shuts down, and they can actually see that damage on CAT scans and MRIs I've had," he described. "I feel lucky that I've recuperated as well as I have. Some of them (concussions) were really bad."

It is too early to tell what the results of Foster's treatments or the study itself will be, but Shawna Weber, office

coordinator of the Wound Care and Hyperbarics department, said they just happy to be involved in the trial. "We really wanted to get involved in possibly being a new treatment (for brain injury)," she said. "There's so many possibilities for hyperbaric oxygen therapy and things that they're exploring that we just wanted to get involved with that."

Weber said they are still looking for more participants to be in the trial, which involves those ages 18 to 65 who have been diagnosed with mild to moderate traumatic brain injury or post-traumatic stress disorder by a neurologist or neuropsychologist. Other criteria must be met and testing will be done. To learn more or find out if you are a candidate, contact Weber at 330-596-7940.

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Meetings & Milestones

Young at Heart marks Thanksgiving

A large wooden turkey greeted the 54 members and guests when Young at Heart met Nov. 14.

A Thanksgiving buffet was supplied with Sandy Floor cooking a turkey and stuffing. The turkey was supplied by the group and sides and desserts were provided by those attending.

The dinner was held in the fellowship hall of First Assembly of God.

Yellow table cloths with cornucopia flower arrangements decorated the tables, as well as bags of candy corn made by Kristi Moore and turkey decorations and turkey cookies supplied by Bill and Jan Trummer.

The meeting was opened with a prayer by the Rev. Larry Grow.

After the meal, leader Joy Whaley made announcements and shared some thoughts with the group.

Connie McMillen did a devotion about opening our eyes and hearts so we can serve others. She also took prayer requests.

"Witty" Willy Whaley was unable to attend so Grow shared some of the "Witty Willy" thoughts.

Roselin Frances announced the birthdays for November, Vonda Miller, Mary Ridsden, Geter Bailey, Bill Trummer,

Hannah Grow and Dale Kelly; and the anniversary, Pat and Geter Bailey.

The entertainment for the evening was an auction with the Rev. William Gross as the funny and entertaining auctioneer.

People attending brought in the items to be auctioned and all were sold.

The next meeting will be at 6 p.m. Dec. 12 in the fellowship hall. Ham will be provided for the buffet dinner with a Christmas theme. Music will be provided by Marilyn Gobel and her accordion.

Alliance Garden Club hears about trip to Uganda

President Bert Nero presented one of the most interesting and educational programs of the season to the Alliance Garden Club at the next to last get-together for the year. As part of her affiliation with Walsh University in the Education Department, Nero was invited twice to accompany other educators to the Kisubi Brothers University, a sister college to Walsh in Uganda. There they shared daily living and tourist experiences with the brothers and sisters of Kisubi. Nero shared pictures of her equatorial crossings, highlights of a boat ride on the Nile river, and numerous cultural experiences.

The altitude, moderate temperatures of 68-70 degrees and 12 hours of daylight resulted in spectacular plant life. Examples are the huge hibiscus trees, lantana plants and walkways lined with sensitive plants that grow as hedges while producing

2- to 3-inch-long thorns at maturity. There were rare daylight viewings of ground hornbills, a leopard lazing in a tree, a lioness with cubs, shoulder-high buzzards and the national bird of Uganda, the crested crane. Highlights of the Nile boat ride were huge crocodiles, a territorial wide-mouthed hippopotamus, and pythons.

The Ugandan language does not have the letter "R" so Nero was called by her middle name with the respectful title of "aunt." Because water is such a precious commodity, bathing, flushing and washing, especially hair, was kept to minimum levels. Ugandan women wear their hair very short to avoid significant water usage. Contamination of the water sources made the use of bottled water a requirement. Women are not allowed to wear pants in the patriarchal society, but they are strongly encouraged to attend school with men, choosing from public, private or religious-based schooling.

Nero stated that these visits were a "roughing it" experience, but she found it very humbling and helpful to appreciate the upbeat nature of the Uganda populace and to more highly value the American lifestyle. Nero will present her Uganda program to interested groups.

At the short business meeting, the placement of a Blue Star Memorial at the Gaskill trailhead was approved. Also approved was the wording on a Legacy Walkway brick at Beechwood Botanical Garden.

Aireen Vickers, chair of the Holly Pine Lane Committee, reminded volunteers to help decorate the club's tree at

the Canton Garden Club's annual tree display.

A free wreath-making workshop will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday at the DeHoff Library Branch in Canton.

Hostesses for the meeting were Barb Randel and Sandy Brewer. A fall-themed dessert table was centered by an arrangement of bittersweet.

The December Christmas dinner meeting will be at 6 p.m. Dec. 11 at the Alliance Woman's Club. Members will be contacted for reservations and are asked to bring canned goods as a donation in lieu of a gift exchange.

Coterie welcomes guest speaker

Members of Coterie met Nov. 7 at the Alliance Woman's Club. Sue Goris welcomed 30 members and guests to the Georgian Room. The tables were decorated in burgundy, gold and forest green, complemented by fresh fall flower centerpieces from DeHoff's. Chef Denise Stanley prepared an autumn "soup and salad" meal. Kale, sausage and butternut squash soup preceded a fresh spinach salad topped with grilled turkey, roasted pecans, fresh Parmesan, apples, pears and a maple balsamic vinaigrette. Chocolate circle cake, drizzled with caramel sauce and macadamia nuts, was served for dessert.

Goris introduced Vondea Sheaffer as the program speaker. Sheaffer is a national development officer for Invent Now. Founded in 1973 with the original name of National Inventors Hall of Fame (NIHF), Invent Now was established to be a catalyst for change through

recognizing inventors and invention, promoting creativity and advancing the spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship. Sheaffer is responsible for building relationships to facilitate private support for the programs of Invent Now, including the Collegiate Inventors Competition, the National Inventors Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony and Camp Invention.

At the STEM School, Invent Now partners with the Akron public school district, the city of Akron, the Greater Akron Chamber of Commerce and the University of Akron to provide the highest quality education experience for students that ensures creativity and inventive thinking through a focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math.)

Camp Invention, one of the largest STEM-based programs of its kind in the country, is a one-week summer program for children entering grades one through six. The curriculum helps develop creative, inventive thinking and problem solving skills through hands-on STEM content. Camp Invention is offered in 49 states to children with diverse abilities, backgrounds and economic conditions. Approximately 80,000 children and counselors participate in Camp Invention in the summer.

Sheaffer works at the corporate office in North Canton. To learn more about Invent Now and its innovative programs, go to www.invent.org

President Marlene Admonius conducted the Coterie business meeting. Betty Thorpe and Cheryl Lundgren distributed the new membership booklets.