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Richard Brunner, CP, Joins Muilenburg

Richard Brunner, CP, is the newest practitioner to join the Muilenburg Prosthetics & Orthotics team. As of mid-October, he is providing comprehensive upper and lower prosthetic services.

Richard comes to Muilenburg following a successful two-and-a-half years owning his own prosthetic and orthotic practice in Southern California. Prior to running his own practice, Richard managed an office for a major national prosthetic company for five years. After obtaining his B.S. degree in 1995 from the University of Utah, he took certification courses at California State-Dominguez Hills University. He became board certified in 2000 by the American Board for Certification in Orthotics & Prosthetics (ABC)

Richard notes how rewarding his career has been. "There are not that many careers where you can change lives by getting people back to their day-to-day lives and also be more than a patient's practitioner, but also their friend," he said.

Richard has been married 17 years. In his free time, Richard enjoys basketball, snow skiing, water sports, surfing, photography and video games.



Ahora los amputados hispanohablantes tienen acceso a información por Internet

La Coalición de Amputados de América (ACA, por sus siglas en inglés) y su Centro Nacional de Información sobre Pérdida de Extremidades (NLLIC, por sus siglas en inglés) anuncian con agrado la sección en español recientemente incorporada en su sitio web <http://www.amputee-coalition.org/Spanish>. Ahora, los hispanohablantes y las personas que ofrecen servicios a esta población, podrán acceder con facilidad a todos los materiales y servicios en español de la ACA. El sitio web proporciona información acerca de los servicios de la ACA, la edición en español de First Step – Una guía para adaptarse a la pérdida de extremidades y una completa base de datos con los artículos más leídos y relevantes de la organización, incluidas las traducciones de las Hojas Informativas del NLLIC y más de 250 ítems de First Step, inMotion, Connections, Expectations y Senior Step. La base de datos es fácil de usar e incluye temas y títulos tanto en español como en inglés. Constantemente se agregan nuevos materiales. Personas amputadas, sus familiares y profesionales médicos pueden llamar al número gratuito de la ACA (1-888-267-5669) para obtener información en español o en inglés, o para solicitar información a través de nuestro cuestionario bilingüe en línea que puede ser utilizado en cualquier momento y desde cualquier lugar. Si necesita información en español para usted o para sus pacientes, no la busque más.

Muilenburg Prosthetics and Orthotics REVIEW

Patient Wants to Know if Chance Encounter Years Ago Had Impact

More than a dozen years ago, a turning point occurred in the Muilenburg waiting room. It was a turning point for Ernestine Andrus, who was being fitted with the first prosthesis that offered her comfort and extended mobility. And Ernestine hopes it also was a turning point for a young girl, a new amputee, who also was visiting the office for the first time.

Ernestine, then a patient of veteran practitioner Bill Brunner, remembers the young girl, aged 16, who sat very quietly, eyes cast down, completely covered with jacket, long skirt, and hat. "That is unusual attire for Texas in August," Ernestine recalled.

As she talked to the girl's mother and grandfather, she learned the girl had lost her leg in an automobile accident. Ernestine, who had been born with only one leg, felt compelled to offer the despondent girl some advice.

Knowing that sometimes pictures speak louder than words, Ernestine took a family photo from her wallet, and showed it to the trio. "I have a wonderful husband and four beautiful children," she explained.

The girl's face showed a glimmer of hope. The mother and grandfather pointed to the picture and spoke excitedly to the girl. The grandfather asked if they could keep the picture. "I offered them a smaller version of it and they took it as if I had given them a treasure," Ernestine said. "This was something of hope for their precious little girl. This was a life, this was a future."

As she left the office, Ernestine had a parting word of advice for the young girl. "Let everyone see how pretty you are. Anyone who lets a missing leg make any difference isn't worth bothering yourself with anyhow."

Ernestine never asked their names and now she is curious. What happened to the beautiful girl? Was she able to move on with her life? Did she marry? She hopes that the young woman may still be a Muilenburg patient, will see the picture in this newsletter, and will get in touch with her. "I would just like to know if I made an impact on her life," she said.

Ernestine's prosthetist, Andre Martinez, CP, commented on Ernestine's deep spirituality that propels her to want to help people, and that makes her confident on the goodness of people. "She's very spiritual," he said. "It's not surprising that



she would reach out to another patient."

Ernestine may have crossed paths with the young woman again if Ernestine had remained an MPO patient. But a move to Louisiana meant she changed her practitioner, and that, she says emphatically, "was a mistake."

"The other practitioner fitted me with a prosthesis that was very uncomfortable, and I was in a lot of pain. It was destroying my back and I was gaining weight because I didn't want to walk any more than I absolutely had to."

Ernestine decided that a few extra miles of travel time to Houston was worth it for a better fitting prosthesis and she became a

patient of Andre Martinez.

After reviewing her history and assessing her needs, Andre determined Ernestine would do best with a Total Knee with extension assist and an adjustable Elation Foot. She wears



The photo of Ernestine and her family that she gave to a fellow patient more than a dozen years ago.

a suction socket with a flexible liner and outside frame. For secondary suspension, a Silesian belt is used.

"We were able to help Ernestine with a prosthesis better

continued on next page

Ernestine, from page 1

suiting to her needs,” Andre said. “She’s a woman on the go, so she needed a system that would give her mobility. The suction socket improved her comfort level, and the Elation foot gives her the versatility to wear sandals or heels.”

“Normally when I deliver a prosthesis, the patient wears it for a week or two and then comes back for further adjustments if necessary. They usually take their old prosthesis with them so they have a backup. Not Ernestine,” he said. “After getting her new prosthesis, she left her old one in my office. She told me she didn’t need it anymore. That’s rare, but Ernestine has that much faith.”

Ernestine’s upbeat attitude and adjustment to change was instilled in her at an early age from parents who encouraged her to be anything she wanted to be.

“I had a birth defect, and at that time, the only way to get any help for my condition was for my parents to sign papers to make me a ward of the state. It was a heart-wrenching decision for them to make, but they had to let me go,” she said.

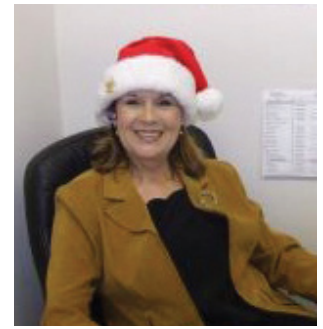
Ernestine became a resident of the Pensacola (Fla.) Crippled Children’s Home when she was nine months old, and received her first prosthesis at the age of 18 months – a pipe with a crutch tip. It did enable her to get up and walking, and her father, a commercial fisherman, was called to see the progress. “He came in from sea, and he had to hitchhike 50 miles to get to the home,” she said. “And then, I refused to walk for him.”

However, the next day, the toddler proudly showed her dad what she could do. “He cried,” she said.

When she was six, she was reunited with her parents to attend school, returning to the Children’s Home when a new prosthesis was needed and to undergo gait training. “I learned how blessed I was because there were so many worse off than me,” she said. “I also learned how to be self-sufficient at an early age. My mother told me, ‘You can either stay here in your room and feel sorry for yourself, or you can get out and live your life.’”

Ernestine chose to live her life. She is now a realtor for ReMax in Louisiana, active in her church as a Bible School teacher, and on the board of directors for City of Refuge, a shelter for homeless men in Vinton, La. She is the matriarch of an extended family of two biological children, two stepchildren, and five grandchildren. She also took under her wing an expectant mother who needed a place to stay, and that baby is included when Ernestine says she has five grandchildren.

She credits the excellent care she receives at MPO for helping her maintain her lifestyle. “At Muilenburg, everyone is so attentive and kind,” Ernestine said. “Thanks to the practitioners there, I can move about comfortably. I love the service I get, and I am very happy with my prosthesis.”



Scout Needs Your Help

Addison Walker is asking his fellow amputees to give him an arm. And a leg. And as many as possible. Addison, a member of Boy Scout Troop 1226 at St. Thomas’ Episcopal School, is collecting no longer used prostheses for a Scouting project that will help amputees in underdeveloped countries.

“If you have any prostheses, upper or lower extremity, that are sitting in your closet, or no longer useful to you, I would appreciate your donation toward my Eagle Scout project,” Addison said. “They will be used for people who would otherwise live without the benefit of an artificial limb.”

Addison is not an Eagle Scout yet, but at age 13, he has already acquired all the merit badges necessary to move to the highest level of Scouting. Among the requirements to become an Eagle Scout, he must plan, develop and give leadership to others in a service project. He has chosen to make life better for other amputees through Limbs for Life, a nonprofit foundation that provides prostheses to people who cannot afford them. Although Limbs for Life relies on fund-raising efforts to provide financial assistance to U.S. citizens for obtaining prostheses, it also accepts used artificial limbs for distribution to clinics in third world countries.

Muilenburg Prosthetics and Orthotics is helping Addison, a patient of Ted Muilenburg since he was four years old, by serving as the collection point for donations, which may be dropped off during office hours. If you would like a receipt for tax deduction documentation, please include your name and address, along with a description of what you donated, and leave it with MPO. Addison and Limbs for Life will do the rest.





(Left photo) Agnes Curran, CP, far left, John Michael, CPO, Loretta Muilenburg, and Ted Muilenburg at the Advanced Prosthetics Clinic. (Center photo) Jean Roden, center, was happy to have her prosthesis checked by John Michael and Josh Utay, CPO, right. (Right photo) Ted Muilenburg explains the technology of the upper extremity prostheses worn by Mark Hamilton.

Free Clinic for Amputees is a Huge Success

Muilenburg Prosthetics and Orthotics, Inc. (MPO) welcomed amputees to an Advanced Prosthetics Clinic Oct. 23-27, held at MPO's facility. The clinic offered attendees a free, personal one-on-one, half-hour evaluation from specialists in lower and/or upper extremity prosthetics; recommendations on what new developments or technology can improve the fit, function, comfort or durability of their prosthesis; and an opportunity to interact with other amputees.

Attendees also toured the facility, and saw and learned about some of the latest developments in prosthetic techniques and state-of-the-art products.

"We were happy to see many of our patients who had not visited us for awhile, and we also welcomed visitors who had never been to our facility," said MPO president Ted Muilenburg, CP.

"We wanted to host this clinic because it's important for amputees to have their prosthesis checked routinely," Ted said. "Changes in weight, activity

level, and body shape mean a prosthesis may be in need of adjustment to assure the patient has the best possible fit for comfort and function."

Joining Muilenburg practitioners in conducting evaluations were nationally-known experts John Michael, CPO, FAAOP, and Agnes Curran, CP.

The event was held in October, if you were not able to attend the free clinic, and have not had your prosthesis checked within the past year, contact MPO to schedule an evaluation.

Otto Bock Introduces Second Generation C-Leg®

Otto Bock has introduced a new version of the C-Leg® microprocessor knee, with new features designed to give wearers more independence without compromising stability.

The new C-Leg now includes:

- A standing mode that gives wearers the ability to easily lock the C-Leg at a variety of flexion angles between seven and 70 degrees, so that they can relax while standing.
- A handheld wireless remote to switch between modes to make slight adjustments to the swing phase dynamics. The remote can set the knee joint specifically for comfortable standing, bicycle riding or inline skating, increasing safety and quality of life.

- Adapting Swing Phase Dynamics, which enable minor adjustments to swing flexion resistances without the hassle of an office visit.
- Extended maintenance intervals to 24 months with a five-year guarantee period.

Cutting-edge prostheses require specialized training to ensure proper fit and maximum benefits to the wearer. Muilenburg practitioner Scott Spring, CP, is certified by Otto Bock to fit the C-Leg. If you are an above-knee amputee and would like more information, or to determine whether the new C-Leg is right for you, call Scott or talk to your Muilenburg practitioner.

