

Bringing great healthcare home: How Gentiva Rehab Without Walls® helped rehabilitate a patient and her family

On October 20, 2002, 17-year-old Dana Berland's life changed forever. As she was leaving her homecoming dance, the car she was riding in collided with an oversized pickup truck about one mile from her family's home in Las Vegas, Nevada. As a result of the accident, Dana suffered a traumatic brain injury.

She emerged from a five-month coma blind, partially paralyzed below the waist, prone to seizures and in excruciating pain. Doctors didn't expect Dana to speak, recognize her family or engage in practical daily living activities again. But as Dana would later say, "They didn't know me."

Dana's parents, Resa and Alan Berland, along with her four sisters, were optimistic, dedicated and unyielding in their care and support for Dana while she endured treatment at local hospitals and rehabilita-

tion facilities. With their help, Dana made unprecedented strides.

After 11 surgeries and a year of hospitalization, Dana was ready to go home and her parents were looking for the next step in her treatment. Recommended to the family by her doctor, Gentiva Rehab Without Walls seemed like the perfect choice for Dana's needs.

Progressive specialties and services are a cornerstone of Gentiva

Gentiva's clinical associates are dedicated to educating and empowering patients to take charge of their own health. Our home healthcare approach is guided by the belief that providing patients with more – and better – information leads to greater compliance, quicker recovery, a higher

level of satisfaction and reduced incidence of hospitalization.

One important way that we are working to foster patient functionality and independence is through the development of Gentiva Specialties and services. Designed and administered by experts, these programs promote better patient outcomes and more efficient, cost-effective care. They feature realistic treatment goals, specialized protocols and educational components for clinicians and patients alike.

Gentiva Rehab Without Walls is home- and community-based neurological rehabilitation that focuses on providing patients with the functional skills necessary to participate in activities of daily living at home, school, work or in the community where they live. The advantage of this comprehensive approach is that a skilled clinical team is able to teach relevant skills in a patient's daily environment as opposed to a facility-based setting. For example, if a patient wants to play the piano again, that becomes part of the rehabilitation routine. When patients have a realistic goal – like returning to a favorite pastime – rehabilitation becomes real.

Collaboration between skilled associates is key

Clinical associates play an important role in neurological rehabilitation, helping patients like Dana and their families adjust to new and different ways of living. The clinical associates at Gentiva Rehab Without Walls have two important goals: to help patients reach their greatest level of health and independence, and to teach friends and family how they can take an active part in helping.

While the physiological impact of many brain or spinal cord injuries may appear to be similar, the ways patients deal with them often vary. Gentiva Rehab Without Walls utilizes an interdisciplinary team approach in order to address all aspects of a patient's condition.



Dana's Gentiva care team, clockwise from left to right: **Lisa Hollick**, Speech Pathologist, **Donna Young**, Clinical Coordinator/Recreational Therapist, **Jenny Robelli**, Rehab Specialist, **Kerry Iannuccilli**, Physical Therapist, **Yvonne Smith**, Adaptive Occupational Therapist

Gentiva's care team can consist of many types of clinicians with a wide range of responsibilities including the following:

Clinical Coordinators –

coordinate services and provide communication among the treatment team, physician, family and payer

Physical Therapists –

work on strength, endurance and mobility

Occupational Therapists –

increase functional independence with activities of daily living such as bathing, dressing, feeding, cooking, shopping, house cleaning, laundry, etc.

Speech Therapists –

enhance communication abilities, address swallowing and feeding difficulties and improve cognitive tasks, such as organization and planning

Recreational Therapists –

incorporate leisure activities into treatment and build connections with community resources

Respiratory Therapists –

assist individuals with chronic or acute respiratory conditions

Neuropsychologists –

provide neuropsychological care and counseling and help patients deal with issues like depression

Dieticians –

review nutritional status and assist in planning an appropriate diet for the individual

Vocational Counselors –

help patients return to work (with or without accommodations) or explore new career options

Medical Social Workers –

assist families in accessing community resources like financial assistance and respite care

Rehabilitation Specialists –

assist patients in following through on the program as established by the therapy team



Yvonne Smith, Adaptive Occupational Therapist, assists Dana with therapy.

Donna Young, a certified therapeutic recreational specialist with Gentiva Rehab Without Walls in Las Vegas, served as both the clinical coordinator and recreational therapist on Dana's case, and understands how advantageous it is for a patient to be treated by a diverse team in the comfort of his or her own surroundings. "With Gentiva Rehab Without Walls, each clinical associate is able to address a patient's condition from a different perspective based on his or her specialty," Young explained. "By receiving this care where they live, patients like Dana learn the skills needed to adapt to their everyday lifestyle changes."

"Gentiva associates were always willing to go the extra mile to find things that worked for us. It was truly amazing."

Better specialties mean better outcomes

The clinical associates at Gentiva Rehab Without Walls not only helped Dana; they helped the entire Berland family. "Dana's clinicians showed us how we could incorporate household items like cushions and chairs into Dana's treatment routine and created fun activities that we all could be involved in and learn from," Resa Berland

commented. "When we mentioned that Dana liked swimming, the Gentiva team found a pool in our community equipped with a Hoyer lift and began treatment there. They were always willing to go the extra mile to find things that worked for us. It was truly amazing."

It may seem amazing to others, but to associates at Gentiva, it's simply "Caring the Gentiva Way." "That's the whole point of the kind of functional treatment Gentiva Rehab Without Walls specializes in," Young said. "We work in the patient's home and environment in real-life situations and with the people involved in their daily treatment. In Dana's case we found activities she could enjoy, and her encouraging, supportive family members were willing to do whatever they could to help her achieve her goals. Better outcomes are why we do what we do. We're not satisfied with anything less than the best."

As a result of therapy, Dana has become increasingly independent in her self-care and can now perform basic tasks such as brushing her teeth and feeding herself that only a short time ago seemed impossible. "Gentiva Rehab Without Walls helped prepare us all for Dana's transition home," Resa said. Her impairment will always be a factor, but with help from Gentiva Rehab Without Walls, both Dana and her family are on the road to recovery.