

Health Care Home produces great results for patients, cost savings for insurers

In its first year, Courage Center's Primary Care Clinic proved that a 'health care home' model of care can improve clients' health, reduce hospitalizations, lower costs, and improve an individual's overall health care experience. Most clinic clients are disabled or have chronic medical conditions such as heart disease, diabetes or mental illness. As a group, clinic clients experienced about 76 percent less time in the hospital than previously (an average of three days rather than 10). This lowers health care costs an average of \$1,320 per person per month. The Primary Care Clinic's doctors, nurses and nurse practitioners – members of Physicians' Associates – understand and are experienced in coordinating all aspects of care and services while keeping the process easy and uncomplicated for clients.

Christopher Anderson, 40, has been a health care puzzle all his life until he joined Courage Center's Primary Care Clinic, when the puzzle pieces finally fell into place.

Anderson was born prematurely. "I had a soft pallet that caused feeding and speech difficulties. As a kid, I was forever getting sick with colds, sinus infections and unexplained pains."

In spite of his poor health, he became a Catholic retreat leader and youth minister in his 20s and worked in New York with at-risk youth.

But by age 33, back in Minnesota, Anderson experienced heart failure.



Christopher Anderson

"That's when the attending doctor noticed my many symptoms and identified their root cause. He tested me for DiGeorge syndrome, a condition resulting from a deletion of part of the human chromosome 22. Sure enough, I have that congenital condition." The soft pallet; the low white blood cell count caused by a malfunctioning thymus gland and resulting low resistance to infections; the malfunctioning thyroid and constant muscle pain and cramping; the low calcium levels; the heart disease; the learning disabilities; the mental health issues – all these symptoms are the result of DiGeorge syndrome.

About two years ago, Anderson's mental health symptoms became more pronounced. They included agoraphobia (fear of interacting in public), anxiety attacks, and post traumatic stress syndrome

from his physical illnesses and the struggles of growing up with speech impairments and learning difficulties. Getting out in the world became overwhelming. Anderson sought help from Courage Center's Adult Rehabilitative Mental Health Services (ARMHS).

"John White, my ARMHS counselor, suggested we coordinate my mental health care with my physical care by making Courage Center my primary care provider. That way, all my counselors and physicians would be on the same page, and I would be treated as a whole individual instead of as an amalgam of many separate parts."

The change was remarkable.

"I'm so pleased to have all my health care under one roof," Anderson said. "It's far less confusing and way more convenient for me. And it cuts down on my anxiety of coordinating appointments and driving, which for some people with mental illness issues, is significant." Anderson also is making use of telemedicine, regularly checking in with doctors and medical professionals without leaving his home – a huge convenience and important tool in maintaining his health.

Anderson believes that the quality of his care has improved through Courage Center. "Because they are all working as a team to help me, I feel I'm getting the best care possible. I feel welcome, connected and useful. And I truly appreciate their humanity."

While DiGeorge syndrome is not curable, its symptoms are now

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Spinal cord injury researcher and former client receives Medtronic National Courage Award

James S. Krause, Ph.D., a Wadena, Minn. native received the 2011 Medtronic National Courage Award at this year's Celebration of Courage on September 24. Dr. Krause, a professor and associate dean of Research in the College of Health Professions at the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) in Charleston, is a leading national expert and researcher who specializes in health and longevity following a spinal cord injury.

The award is especially meaningful to Krause, who has a spinal cord injury. From 1976 through 1979, he was a student at the University of Minnesota and lived at Courage Residence, today known as Courage Center's Transitional

Rehabilitation Program (TRP). A three-year inpatient stay at Courage Center was common during the 1970s and 1980s in large part because accessible housing was limited. Today, the average length of stay for someone with a spinal cord injury is 99 days.

"I am truly honored beyond anything that can easily be put into words," said Krause upon learning of his award. "I was a Courage Center inpatient for more than three years and certainly would not have been able to accomplish nearly as much as I have without the benefit of the services I received there. It gave me a foundation from which to build. The friendships I developed there have lasted. Receiving



Medtronic National Courage Award recipient, Dr. James Krause and his wife Laura.

this award will help me continue my work and to positively impact the lives of people with disabilities."

Celebration of Courage a jazzy success

The food, music and atmosphere at this year's Celebration of Courage evoked 1930s New Orleans, but the focus of the event was very much the present day. Inspired by client videos which highlighted the difference Courage Center services made in their lives, guests donated generously during both the live and silent auctions.

The Earle Brown Heritage Center was transformed into pre-jazz age New Orleans at this year's Celebration of Courage. The event raised more than \$250,000 for Courage Center programs and services.

A special thank you to our sponsors: Medtronic, Morrie's Automotive Group, Popp.com, Best Buy and The Jay & Rose Phillips Family Foundation.



One of the evenings' highlights was a surprise presentation of a Midwest Emmy to Doris Rosen (right), a Courage Center volunteer, and Rosalee Vascellaro (left), affectionately referred to as "The Grannies" by WCCO TV viewers. The two helped emcee the event.

Christopher Anderson *continued from page 1*

better managed by Anderson under the direction of Courage Center. His medications are coordinated to deliver maximum benefits without incurring side effects. And he now feels well enough to be an active participant in his health care.

Equally important, he's getting out more. "Courage Center asked me to be on the Physicians' Clinic board of advisors," he said. Public advocacy on behalf of people with disabilities is definitely on Anderson's to-do list. So is writing his book, its working title, *Topher's Story: A Life of Grace*. "Given that most babies born with DiGeorge syndrome seldom live beyond 5 years of age, I'm one of the lucky ones," he said. "There has to be a reason I'm still here. I've got work to do."

Groundbreaking brings accessible ball field closer to reality

Last summer Courage Center was chosen by the Minnesota Twins to be their charity partner for the Major League Baseball (MLB) Pepsi Refresh challenge. Fifteen MLB teams from around the country participated – the Twins and Courage Center won.

On Saturday morning, Sept. 24, representatives of the Twins, Pepsi, Courage Center and the City of Brooklyn Park joined the Jr. Rolling Twins and the (adult) Rolling Twins to break ground on a new home field located at Northwoods Park at 107th and Winnetka Ave. in Brooklyn Park. The new field, which will be Minnesota's first competitive accessible softball field, is scheduled to open next summer.



The groundbreaking crew included (left to right): Former Minnesota Twins players Tony Oliva and Julio Becquer; Bryan Donaldson, director of Community Relations, Minnesota Twins; Dawnette Snyder, manager, Customer Marketing, Pepsi Bottling Group; former Twins player and Brooklyn Park native Tim Laudner; Courage Center CEO Jan Malcolm; Kurt Greniger, Rolling Twins team member; Minnesota Twins President Dave St. Peter, Minnesota Twins; Marissa Bartels, Rolling Twins team member; Brooklyn Park Mayor Jeffrey Lunde; Sharon Van Winkel, Courage Center; and Shane Swanson, Jr. Rolling Twins team member.

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Planned giving can help protect your family's financial resources, now and into the future. Plus, it's a convenient way to support a non-profit organization.

Courage Center has a resource guide which can help you sort through the many planned giving options. To receive yours, contact Walt Seibert, senior development officer/Planned Giving at Courage Center, 763-520-0532, or email walt.seibert@couragecenter.org.



Microsoft giving software worth \$3.7 million to Courage Center

As gifts go, for Courage Center, it's huge. In July, a software grant from Microsoft Corp., totaling more than \$15 million was awarded to United Way of Washington County-East and 18 partner agencies, including Courage Center.

"This collaborative grant is a huge infusion of support for United Way and partners serving Washington County," said Marna Canterbury, executive director, United Way of Washington County-East. "We are so grateful to Microsoft for working with United Way to support essential services in our community through this amazing investment."

Courage Center's total grant allocation is \$3.7 million. "In the near future, every Courage Center client, employee and department will benefit from it in the form of improved care, collaboration, productivity, business intelligence and outcomes measurement," said Peter Polga, director of Strategy and Planning, who spearheaded Courage Center's portion of the grant application.

onward is published four times a year for friends of Courage Center, a nonprofit rehabilitation and resource center that advances the lives of children and adults experiencing barriers to health and independence.

At Courage Center, we specialize in treating brain injury, spinal cord injury, stroke, chronic pain, autism and disabilities experienced since birth. Founded in 1928, Minnesota-based Courage Center offers advanced technologies and innovation provided in part through the efforts of thousands of volunteers and donors.

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