

EM POWER.

The possibilities you are
creating for people like
Richard & Courtney.

WINTER/
SPRING
2023





“

I was so excited for [my first day at Turnstone]. It was an OT (Occupational Therapy) evaluation, but **doors just opened from there.**”

In December 2021, Kirsten was just getting a taste of teenage independence when her life changed drastically.

Just two days after Christmas, she noticed some unusual symptoms. In a matter of six hours, Kirsten went from healthy to becoming paralyzed from the neck down.

After a few days, several doctors, and a transfer to Riley Hospital, Kirsten was diagnosed with Transverse Myelitis. This autoimmune disease attacks the spinal cord and can cause a range of symptoms. Because the disease attacked the upper part of her spine, Kirsten lost all feeling and movement from the neck down. After decreasing the spinal swelling, Kirsten underwent three months of inpatient rehab in Indianapolis

Meet Kirsten.



"It was really intensive therapy. I had two OT [occupational therapy] sessions and two PT [physical therapy] sessions every day, for six days a week," said Kirsten.

After she returned home, she was put on several waitlists for therapy. The three months without therapy took a major toll on her mentally and physically. She had lost a lot of the independence she had been getting used to as a teenager and she was eager to regain it.

"I thought 'I can't do this anymore' and I felt like nothing was ever going to change," said Kirsten. "I felt like I was losing all the progress I had made at Riley." That's when her mom called Turnstone.

"I was so excited for [my first day at

Turnstone]. It was an OT evaluation, but doors just opened from there. I remember being so excited but I was also really nervous, because I was going to find out where I was at after that long break [without therapy]. It was a relief to be [at Turnstone] because it was an opportunity to make progress," Kirsten recalled.

Kirsten now receives physical therapy, occupational therapy and counseling support at Turnstone. She especially loves physical therapy sessions in the pool and her counseling sessions. In Occupational Therapy, she has relearned how to write and use utensils in a way that works for her. In Physical Therapy, she is able to stand in the parallel bars for 10 minutes and walk 3 laps around the pool. And, in Counseling she has learned new ways to cope

and how to adapt socially. Though she is excited about how far she has come physically, it is clear that Kirsten is most proud of her progress with counseling.

"Before getting my diagnosis, I had never talked to any kind of counselor or anything so it was actually really scary. Once I got used to it, I loved counseling and felt a huge weight lift off my shoulders after each session," she said. "It's just been really helpful to get through all this with somebody supporting me in that way. Obviously, physical and occupational therapy are super important, but the mental health has to be there too. I can work on my body all I want but my mind has to be there, too."

Kirsten's Turnstone experience has not only provided her with the services

and support she needs to reach her personal goals, but it has also inspired a new career path for her.

Though Kirsten has only been a client at Turnstone for a short amount of time, she has already accomplished several goals, discovered new possibilities for her future, and taken steps towards independence. She was very excited that in October 2022, she went out with her friends for the first time without relying on her mom to help with transferring. As Kirsten continues to adjust to this new phase of her life, Turnstone supports her in finding adaptations and empowering her to do the things she used to do with family and friends. Though she is discovering her independence at a different pace with different obstacles than she had before, at Turnstone, she is learning that anything is possible.



Meet Scott.

Scott, also known as “Bear” by his fellow Rock Steady Boxers, is a good-humored, kind Turnstone Fitness member who has a passion for community building.

During his time at Turnstone so far, he has made it his personal mission to bring people together and support each other.

Scott has been familiar with Turnstone for several years because of his professional role in a local rehabilitation department; however, Scott was not personally connected to Turnstone until he was officially diagnosed with Parkinson's in 2019.

“Because I am a man and a lot of us put our health off, I insisted that I was fine,” he joked. Once he received the diagnosis, his neurologist suggested he join Rock Steady Boxing. Unfortunately, because he did not have a location nearby at the time, Scott had to try and find other ways to stay active. This was challenging for him because he prefers structure and connection with others to help motivate him.

“I tried to be physically active but without the team, it was hard. The team is everything. I find that structure is very helpful and that's what Rock Steady and Turnstone have given me,” he said. In November 2021, Scott's friends and family saw an interview online about a new Rock Steady Boxing class being offered by Turnstone's Fitness Center and encouraged him to try it. After the holidays, he came to visit and instantly felt the motivation to be active and he wanted to join that day.

As a team builder, Scott quickly made personal connections with fellow boxers and

fitness clients. Scott enjoys walking the track before his Rock Steady Boxing class and makes it a point to check in on his fitness friends often.

“We're all in this together and we understand one another. We try and draw everyone into our group; we don't shut anyone out because we really feel like Turnstone is a family,” said Scott. Scott and his friends developed a strong group environment within Turnstone and continue to contribute to the welcoming environment that Turnstone is known for.

“A lot of people when they find out that they are ill or have a long term disability, tend to shut themselves in and push the rest of the world away. One of the things I am hoping to do is to reach out to those people and tell them that no matter what you have, you still have a life, you still have a purpose and you still have a place here [at Turnstone] where you will be accepted and you won't be judged,” said Scott.


Before Turnstone, Scott didn't have a

structured plan to help him stay active or a community of people who could relate to his situation with Parkinson's. Now, not only does he have a community that he can lean on where people are valued for their abilities but he also has a team of supportive staff to help him reach his personal fitness goals. Turnstone's Fitness Center met him where he was at in his own fitness journey and worked with him to create a plan of action that fits his goals and needs.

“I hope others see that even though they don't have the same abilities as the person next to them, their community at Turnstone still recognizes them and their achievements,” said Scott.

Scott urges anyone with Parkinson's to [visit the Rock Steady Boxing class](#) at Turnstone so that they can find support in their journey and talk about their personal experiences with people who can relate. He also encourages people of all abilities to give Turnstone's Fitness Center a try so that they can find ways to move that work for them and start working towards their goals.





For more information on Fitness memberships at
Turnstone visit [Turnstone.org](https://turnstone.org) or call 260.483.2100

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Thank you for your gifts

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Push Paddle Pedal

| [Starting May 27, 2022](#)

Commit to logging 100 miles of your activity of choice and make a difference in the lives of children and adults with disabilities in our community through Turnstone's "Push, Paddle, or Pedal" challenge event, that encourages supporters and community members to move 100 miles throughout the summer. This year, you can start logging your miles on Friday, May 27th!

Center Stage: Fort Wayne's Premiere Talent Show

| [May 12, 2022](#)

In its inaugural year, "Center Stage: Fort Wayne's Premier Talent Show" presented by Sweetwater at the Clyde Theatre, will feature local performing artists of all talents and abilities. Turnstone Center believes in a people-first approach to empowerment and celebrating talent-first opportunities. "Center Stage" is a first-of-its-kind talent experience in our community, elevating talent and performing arts for all people with and without disabilities. The Finale Show scheduled for the evening of Thursday, May 12, 2022.

Upcoming Events

Board Of Directors' Gala

| September 8, 2022

The sparkles and suits get brought out for Turnstone's signature fundraising event hosted by the Turnstone Board of Directors. The event features dinner, and unique live and silent auctions. A special 'Mission Moment' is shared by a Turnstone client, which always proves to be the highlight of this extraordinary evening.

Birthday Give Day

| October 5, 2022

Your gifts on October 5th will celebrate Turnstone's birthday and 79 years of creating possibilities. Stay tuned for more information about how you can join us for this inaugural event. Save the date!

Thank you to our Annual Sponsors



*All event dates and times subject to change. For the most up-to-date information about tournaments and volunteer opportunities, visit us at Turnstone.org



Join the PEP Club and belong to a special group of monthly donors who are committed to making a difference in the lives of individuals with disabilities. For more information about Turnstone's PEP Club and exclusive benefits, you can visit turnstone.org/donate/pepclub or contact rena@turnstone.org.

Turnstone.org/Donate/PEPclub



A NOTE FROM THE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Mike Mushett

Enjoying back-to-back Summer and Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games is thrilling for sports fans and spectators. Globally we also have the privilege of witnessing epic athlete performances achieved through a combination of talent and training. Equally as important, we cannot forget to consider the journey that leads to such milestones, and the small victories that happened through the achievement of goals made possible by hard work when none of us were watching.

The journey is what Turnstone, and Turnstone's mission, is all about. The small victories that lead you one step closer to your goals, and one day closer to life moments that are often more precious than a gold medal. In this issue of the EMPOWER newsletter, you will read about Courtney and Rich, two clients whose journeys have been made possible in large part thanks to the services at Turnstone our donors and partners make possible.

Turnstone's 79-year history is one whose very foundation continues to be the inclusive and generous spirit of our community and our supporters. Whether it is the hours of volunteer time in one of our program areas, or the countless donations that ensure our doors stay open, Turnstone has always been made possible by our community and focused on serving our community.

Thank you for joining us on our journey to creating a world that accepts and values all people based on their abilities. Inclusive communities that put people first create victories for all of us.

Fort Wayne's Premier Talent Show

MAY 9 // CLYDE THEATRE

Turnstone.org/CenterStage



Turnstone

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**CENTER
STAGE**