

REACH

ISSUE 1 2025

Stories of Inspiration
from *REHAB Hospital*

LEARNING TO LET GO

with

Deborah Kobayakawa

Stroke Survivor &
REHAB Community Member

At 8:24 a.m. on the morning of April 4th, 2024, Deborah Kobayakawa knew that something wasn't quite right.

"I was taking my vitamins, and no sooner had I put them in my mouth than I watched them tumble down my chest into the sink. I thought, 'that's really strange,' and I looked into the mirror just as the left side of my face began to droop."

Deborah's husband called 9-1-1 and within thirty minutes she was at The Queen's Medical Center learning that she suffered a hemorrhagic stroke.

A day that started like any other quickly devolved into one of the scariest days of Deborah's life. "It was horrifying," Deborah said. "I prayed all the way [to the hospital] and just kept thinking, 'what if I never see my kids or family again?' I had just been with my eldest son and his children a few weeks earlier—I thought of holding them and had this feeling that *I needed to make it.*"

continued on pg. 3

Pictured: Deborah uses the NuStep Recumbent Cross Trainer at REHAB's Strength & Balance class.

REHAB
FOUNDATION



TO OUR REHAB OHANA

As we move into spring, we are reminded of the growth and renewal that continues to unfold at REHAB Hospital of the Pacific. With the support of our donors, partners and community, we are able to offer new opportunities for progress and healing that have a lasting impact on the lives of those we serve.

In this edition of our REACH newsletter, we are excited to highlight the addition of new equipment designed to enhance patient independence and improve staff safety: the Handicare QuickMove Sit-to-Stand Transfer Aids. This tool increases the efficiency of our operations, allowing us to better serve our patients and improve outcomes.

We are also thrilled to welcome new staff members to REHAB who bring a wealth of expertise and passion to the team. Each staff member plays an essential role in ensuring that our patients receive the best care possible, and we are excited to have them as part of our growing ohana as we move into 2025.

Most importantly, we celebrate stories like Deborah Kobayakawa's, which remind us that recovery is not always linear, but every step forward is progress. Her journey underscores the power of patience, perseverance and the support of others during challenging times. Our patients' strength, resilience and determination are at the heart of everything we do, and as we continue to support their rehabilitation journeys, we are reminded of the transformative impact your support has on their lives.

Mahalo again for your invaluable partnership in our mission. Together, we are making a difference in the lives of those we serve.

With appreciation and aloha,



Stanford Carr
Chairman of the Board,
REHAB Foundation



Jennifer Onishi
Executive Director,
REHAB Foundation

In the Community



Creative Arts Program
Tuesdays & Thursdays
12:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.
REHAB Hospital of the Pacific,
Nuuanu

At REHAB's Creative Arts Program, current and former REHAB patients with neurological or physical impairments can learn new artistic skills all while connecting with others who relate to their experiences.



Stroke Support Group
First Thursday of the month
10:00 a.m.
REHAB Hospital of the Pacific,
Nuuanu

REHAB's Stroke Support Group provides a space for stroke survivors and their families to gather with others who face similar challenges. Meetings feature cooking tutorials, educational talks with REHAB doctors, group music, games and more.



The Journey Forward
In honor of National Stroke Awareness Month, REHAB will be hosting an art exhibition to showcase artworks by our awesome community of stroke survivors. The centerpiece of the exhibition will be a collaborative group piece that celebrates the power of creativity and community when healing from a stroke.
Stay tuned for more information on our social media channels!



Want to learn more about our community initiatives?

Scan the QR code or visit rehabhospital.org/community to request more information on adaptive sports, community support opportunities and upcoming events!



WITH TEAM REHAB:
BRIAN LERCH
Director of Referral Relations

REHAB welcomes their new Director of Referral Relations, Brian Lerch, MBA, RN, an experienced healthcare professional with over 13 years of experience as a healthcare leader.

Q: In your role, how do you foster collaboration and trust with referring physicians and other healthcare organizations in the community?

A: The key to our collaborative community relationships is frequent, transparent communication while always keeping the patients' best interest as the common denominator and priority.

Q: REHAB has a strong emphasis on the overall patient experience. How do you

communicate the value of our individualized care?

A: My experience as a registered nurse and in nursing leadership roles allows me to understand the full timeline of care for a patient and exactly how REHAB's individualized care fits within that timeline. Having worked in both the skilled nursing facility level of rehabilitation and home health, I have experienced care alternatives that make me sincerely appreciate and champion the incredible care and services we provide here at REHAB.

Q: Tell us about your passions outside of your work at REHAB.

A: I am passionate about abstract painting and



endurance events! When I paint it is one of the few times when I can immerse myself in creativity and lose track of time. At endurance events like rucking and obstacle course races, I enjoy pushing myself. I feel you are only truly challenging yourself when taking on something you don't know you can accomplish. But above all, my favorite thing is being a father to my 12-year-old son!

continued from pg. 1

LEARNING TO LET GO with Deborah Kobayakawa

Deborah also had other family members on her mind as she went through tests and treatments to stabilize from her stroke. As the legal guardian of her youngest adult son with intellectual and developmental disabilities, she worried about how her injury would affect him. "We had everything in place for him," she shared, "but this was the test, and there was this moment at the hospital where I realized I needed to let go for my own wellbeing and trust that the team and safety net we'd created for him in a situation like this would work." With self-granted permission to focus on her own recovery, a few days later Deborah was stable and transferred to REHAB to begin her journey as a stroke survivor.

At REHAB, the goal was to rebuild Deborah's physical and mental functions. "I started from a low place," she said. "I couldn't do anything on my own. I couldn't use my left arm or hand and I had a 60% loss of peripheral vision in my left eye." But it wasn't just physical impairments that Deborah had to work through, it was mental challenges as well. "I went from controlling everything in my life for my family, my son and my business to needing help from someone to do everything—that was the hardest part to tackle."



Deborah and her sons at REHAB.

But tackle it she did. "I got really good at ripping open sweetener packets one handed with my teeth for morning coffee—I wouldn't let the aides help me," she laughed. "I said 'this is one thing I can do right now and I am going to do it!'" The determination that started with a sweetener packet would carry Deborah through the next

Deborah taking in the views with her husband, Rodney, seven months after her stroke.



weeks of intensive therapy where Team REHAB helped her relearn how to eat, swallow and use her muscles with assistance from electrical stimulation therapy devices. "The electrical stimulation therapy was big for me because it retaught me how to pair what I was seeing visually with my motor skills."

"This was the hardest thing I've ever had to do, but [Team REHAB's] kindness and compassion was huge in my recovery. They helped me get my life back."

Deborah recalls that it was her husband, sons, family, business partner and Team REHAB that she leaned on for support during her hardest days. "The level of care that REHAB provided me as an inpatient up on the fourth floor was amazing," Deborah said. "All the CNAs and therapists, the people who helped me get ready to start the day and end the day, they treated me with the utmost care and dignity. This was the hardest thing I've ever had to do, but their kindness and compassion was huge in my recovery. They helped me get my life back."

Today, Deborah is still incredibly active in the community, both at REHAB and in Hawaii. She stays connected with other stroke survivors at Stroke Support Group and is a regular at the REHAB STRONG Strength & Balance class.

When asked what she would say to other stroke survivors just starting their journey, she shared, "The biggest thing is that you have to believe in your own recovery and you have to believe that at some point it will happen—but you can't get stuck on the timing. All progress is progress. As long as the trajectory is going the way you want it to be going, just let it go and keep practicing, keep working at it. It will happen."



Read the rest of Deborah's story on our website at rehabhospital.link/deborah

New Tech:

HANDICARE QUICKMOVE SIT-TO-STAND TRANSFER AIDS



REHAB is excited to share the addition of Handicare QuickMove Sit-to-Stand Transfer Aids to each of our hospital floors. "The QuickMove enhances the safety and efficiency of our patient transfers by drastically decreasing the amount of lifting needed to get a patient from point A to point B," shared Brandon Wong, REHAB's Director of Nursing and Interim Chief Nursing Officer.



The QuickMove Sit-to-Stand Transfer Aids are part of REHAB's ongoing commitment to investing in tools that improve patient care and support staff in their daily work. The addition of this equipment not only decreases

the likelihood of staff injury, but can also be used as a physical therapy tool and ultimately allows patients to maximize their independence.

"As a patient, if you had a stroke, and now somebody's carrying you everywhere, it doesn't feel great for your sense of self. These devices allow patients to do as much as they can on their own while still being supported."

Brandon Wong
Director of Nursing and
Interim Chief Nursing Officer



SHARE YOUR REHAB STORY

Everyone who comes through our doors has a story to tell. If you or a family member had an impactful experience at REHAB, we'd love to hear from you!

Want to share your story? Send in the form below or scan the QR code to learn more.

Name

Title: _____

First name: _____

Last name: _____

Contact

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Brief summary of your experience



To access the online version of this form, scan the QR code or visit [REHABhospital.org/myREHABstory](https://rehabhospital.org/myREHABstory).

REHAB FOUNDATION

Rehabilitation Hospital of the Pacific Foundation
226 North Kuakini Street • Honolulu, Hawaii 96817



Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Honolulu, Hawaii
Permit No. 1343

ISSUE 1 2025

REACH

Stories of Inspiration from *REHAB Hospital*

Connect with us!

 @REHABHospitalPacific

 @REHABhospital

foundation@rehabhospital.org

808.566.3451

[REHABhospital.org/foundation](https://rehabhospital.org/foundation)

SAVE THE DATE



27TH ANNUAL

the JOY of Food & Wine

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2025
HALEKULANI HOTEL

For more information and to look at last year's event, scan the QR code or visit rehabhospital.org/JOFW2025



30th Annual REHAB GOLF Challenge

Sponsored by



First Hawaiian Bank

WEDNESDAY, MAY 28, 2025 • HAWAII PRINCE GOLF CLUB

It's Tee Time for a Great Cause!

We are thrilled to be back 'in the swing of things' for our 30th Annual REHAB Golf Challenge sponsored by First Hawaiian Bank. Please join us on Wednesday, May 28, 2025 at the beautiful Hawaii Prince Golf Club for a day of golf and fun while supporting a cause that is close to our hearts.

Become a sponsor or register your team today!



Scan the QR code or visit rehabhospital.org/golf2025