



# Amputees Together, Inc.

A Non-Profit Organization  
Affiliated with the American Amputee Foundation, Inc.

MAY/JUNE 2009

## e-Newsletter

This newsletter is emailed to support group members every other month. Current amputee-related topics, upcoming events, and personal testimonial stories keep members informed and inspired. Newsletter paper copies can also be mailed upon request, at no charge.

Contact Jennifer Robinson at (813) 985-5000 ext 204, or email [jennifer@wcbl.com](mailto:jennifer@wcbl.com) for more information.

## Who We Are

**Amputees Together, Inc.** is a non-profit organization whose membership consists of upper and lower extremity amputees, their families and friends, and interested healthcare professionals.

This group holds meetings in Hillsborough and Pinellas counties each month.

Guest speakers frequent our lively meetings, which offer both informative presentations and informal 'rap' sessions.

Yearly membership dues of ten dollars are used to cover activity expenses. **However, membership dues are not required to be able to attend group meetings. Join us today.**

Amputees Together, Inc., founded & hosted by



*When sharing her story with us, Shannon Snyder began by telling us about the long journey she made towards rehabilitation. After several unsuccessful surgeries and years of pain, Shannon decided to have her leg amputated below the knee.*

## Shannon's Career Adventure: Part 2

On November 2, 2007, Shannon Snyder finally had her leg amputated below knee. Shannon tells us, "If you look at pictures of me in the hospital, I have a great big smile! I knew this was the only way I would ever walk again and have the opportunity to be a nurse and put my graduate degree to work!"

Shannon was extremely excited to finally be fit with a prosthesis and begin her rehabilitation. Unfortunately, due to insurance reasons, her physical therapy was discontinued after only two months. But she did not give up! She joined the YMCA on a scholarship. Shannon continued on her own what she learned from her sessions at physical therapy. She even learned to swim again! "What a life saver swimming was during the summer of 2008. I lost 20 pounds, learned to walk a mile on the treadmill, ride a stationary bike and by September 2008 I was on the front door steps of Vocational Rehabilitation. I was ready to go back to work!"

While being fit with her definitive prosthesis, which Shannon refers to as her "High-Tech Leg", Shannon applied for employment throughout the country. As this application process took her from state to state, she became well-acquainted with airport protocol. "My Boston trip was a true adventure. This was my first time on an airplane since 2003 and since my amputation. I was pretty scared of the whole flying thing. There were many obstacles I had to get over. First: the added security. Be prepared to be taken aside and given the full work up! I flew US airways, and they were very courteous and did not make me take off my prosthetic leg. Be sure to ask them to bring your belongings over to you after they are scanned. It is too hard to watch your stuff while they are frisking you."

The path to employment was often filled with disappointment and uncertainty for Shannon. Sometimes, she was unsure about how to approach the topic of her amputation. Shannon remembers one of her interviews went very well, "until it was time to follow everyone up and down many flights of stairs in the hospital. Again, I kept my prosthetic leg to myself. Although, during the interview with the Director of Nursing, the Medical Director and the Nurse Manager I noticed the DON looking down at my foot. I did not make anything out of it, until her second or third look."



## Helpful Resources

**Amputees Together, Inc**  
Jennifer Robinson  
Toll Free 1-888-552-2555  
(813) 985-5000 ext 204  
www.wcbl.com

**.Amputee Coalition of America  
(ACA)**  
1-888-267-5669  
www.amputee-coalition.org

**360 O&P**  
An Online Orthotic & Prosthetic  
Resource  
www.360oandp.com



### Factoids:

A protective cover for a leg or arm prosthesis does make the prosthesis look more realistic. This is why the covering is sometimes referred to as 'cosmetic finishing'.

However, protective covers also have a more functional role. The cover protects the inner components of a prosthesis from harmful elements, such as water... and protects furniture from the inner components!



**Did you know?** Many people with limb deficiencies are active in sports. Amputees may decide to participate in sports without special modifications. For those athletes who prefer or require the use of a wheelchair, there are many options available.

Basketball, tennis, track & field, ice sled hockey, power lifting, swimming, wheelchair rugby, boccia, goalball, bowling, cycling, soccer, volleyball, wheelchair team handball, wheelchair softball, and scuba are just some examples of sporting activities that can be modified to accommodate limb deficiencies. For more information on modified sports, contact BlazeSports Tampa Bay at (813) 744-5307.

## Shannon's Career Adventure, Part 2, Continued:

"The topic never came up, so I did not mention it. That afternoon, as I was touring the hospital with two nurses, we were walking down another flight of stairs and I guess my limp became noticeable. My prosthetist always says I walk well, and I made a conscious effort to walk tall and without a limp. The nurse asked me about it, and I freely discussed it and showed her my prosthetic leg. I assured her I could walk better now than before." Sometimes Shannon wondered if the prosthesis was influencing her success at getting hired. But eventually, she came to view her physical difference as an advantage. She certainly can identify with the 'patient experience' and Shannon believes this heightened level of empathy makes her a better nurse.

Fast forward to June of 2009. After a lengthy journey, filled with peaks and valleys, Shannon Snyder has accepted a position at a world renowned hospital in their Pediatric PACU for the Core Team. Moving from Tampa was a great emotional and physical challenge. Amputees Together, Inc. will certainly miss her smiling face at meetings. Congratulations, Shannon, on your newest adventure!

What is **Vocational Rehabilitation**? Florida's Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program is a division of the Department of Education. It aims to assist people with physical or mental impairments in finding and maintaining employment. As part of this commitment, VR provides funding for a multitude of services. Individuals seeking assistance from VR will be assigned to a VR counselor. In order to be eligible for services, (1) the individual's impairment must constitute or result in a substantial impediment to employment, (2) the individual can benefit from VR services in terms of reaching an employment outcome, (3) the individual requires VR services to prepare for, obtain, keep, or regain employment. Florida's VR program currently places eligible participants on a waiting list, based on the severity of the impairment. Eligible participants may also be subject to a co-pay for medical services, based on the individual's income level. There are many VR offices throughout Florida. To locate a local VR office, go to [www.rehabworks.org](http://www.rehabworks.org), or call (850) 245-3399.

Examples of VR funding services:

#### **Assessment:**

Medical, psychological, work evaluation

#### **Job Placement:**

Helping find a job, job follow-up, assisting with accommodations

#### **Other Services:**

Counseling & guidance, sign language interpreting, career planning, job coaching, assistive technology (*including prosthetic devices & wheelchairs*)

#### **Training:**

On-the-job training, post secondary education, colleges & universities, technical & vocational schools

## Upcoming Events

### **Amputees Together, Inc. Tampa June Meeting**

**June 25, 2009**

**6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.**

**Westcoast Brace & Limb**

**5311 E. Fletcher Avenue, Tampa, FL 33617**

**Contact: Jennifer Robinson, (813) 985-5000 ext 204, [jennifer@wcbl.com](mailto:jennifer@wcbl.com)**

### **Alliance for Citizens with Disabilities (ADA) Expo Awareness Event:**

**July 25, 2009**

**10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.**

**Tampa's Museum of Science and Industry (MOSI)**

**4801 East Fowler Avenue, Tampa, FL 33617**