

CASESTUDY

High Tech Rehab Equipment from Biodex and determination pays off for TBI and Stroke Survivors

**New Beginnings Community Center
for Brain Injury Rehabilitation**



BIODEX
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New Beginnings Community Center for Brain Injury Rehabilitation

When you walk into New Beginnings Community Center for Brain Injury Rehabilitation in Medford, NY, the welcoming feeling and positive energy permeate the building. Allyson Scerri, Founder & President, and Kate DiMeglio, Vice President, opened the state-of-the-art outpatient facility in April 2011, as a result of a common bond.

After tragedy hit both of their lives, Scerri and DeMeglio came together to create the first facility of its kind, which provides progressive long-term rehabilitation services for survivors of traumatic brain injury (TBI) and other cognitive and physical disorders. Scerri's father suffered a traumatic brain injury as a result of a serious motorcycle accident, leaving him unable to walk or talk after coming out of a long-term coma. DeMeglio's son was left a quadriplegic, blind, and unable to speak, due to a horrific car accident on his 21st birthday.

"I never knew anything about traumatic brain injury," says Scerri. "And when I went out into society to learn about what kinds of therapy were available, I couldn't believe that there were no places that would accept somebody like my father, who was 67, combative and angry." DeMeglio was in a similar situation. The doctors said that her son would never progress and that he would remain in a vegetative state for the rest of his life.



Dennis, a 49 year old stroke patient, learns to walk again using the Biodex Unweighing System.



Allyson Scerri, Founder & President, and Kate DiMeglio, Vice President of New Beginnings

Unsatisfied with the prognoses and frustrated by inadequate care, Scerri and DeMeglio were determined to provide the best rehabilitation for their loved ones and maximize their quality of life. That was the turning point and the advent of New Beginnings.

Scerri had seen Biodex equipment throughout her father's rehabilitation process. "I saw the equipment everywhere we went," explained Scerri. "It's absolutely the best there is and has helped my father get where he is today." When Biodex learned about the development of New Beginnings, the CEO went to visit the facility three months before it opened. An assessment was made of the rehab equipment they needed to accommodate the new facility. Today, New Beginnings is using two BioStep Semi-Recumbent Elliptical systems, Balance System SD, Gait Trainer 3, and Unweighing System from Biodex.

First Steps with the Biodex Unweighing System

"The Biodex Unweighing System is our newest piece of equipment," explains Bill Broglie, New Beginnings Physical Therapist. "Everyone here loves it. Before getting this equipment, I had patients whose balance and ataxia were so bad, that is was just too unsafe for them to walk and ambulate in anyway. Today, I have patients that are walking because of the Unweighing System."

"The Biodex equipment gives our patients the confidence they need," says Broglie. "Although they cannot walk on their own, the Unweighing System gives them the sensation of walking. It gives them the hope that maybe they will walk again one day. And, when their confidence is built up, it makes them want to work harder. Families are seeing their loved ones walking for the first time in years. It's truly amazing!"

TBI survivors learn to walk

Kate DeMeglio's son had a similar experience with the Unweighing System "When Robert first used the Unweighing System, it was the first time he actually stood on his own in 13 years," explains DeMeglio. "At the beginning, it was about learning how to move his legs again. And, because of his spinal cord injury, he also had to relearn balance. Bill, our Physical Therapist works with him for about a half hour to forty minutes, and by the end of the session, Bill doesn't even have to direct him. He actually knows when to turn, when to pick up his left leg. He is actually taking steps instead of dragging or shuffling his feet. It's really amazing to watch him."

Broglie explains, "We want to get Rob to the next level because he's not scissoring or doing as much ataxia. He's actually walking in a straight line. The next step is to get him on the Gait Trainer 3 with the Unweighing System to support him. We can work on getting him walking further and gaining more strength."

"I think he thrives on going to therapy," says DeMeglio.

"The Biodex equipment gives our patients the confidence they need. Although they cannot walk on their own, the Unweighing System gives them the sensation of walking. It gives them the hope that maybe they will walk again one day."

"He gets very excited because he knows he is going to take those steps. It's a great thing to see. I just want a good quality of life for my son and the Unweighing System is helping him achieve that."

Another Unweighing System success

"Ginger is a spinal cord patient of ours," explains Broglie. "She was a very athletic woman, but unfortunately she was in a bad skiing accident. When she heard we were getting the Unweighing System, she was elated. You can see in her eyes that she wants to walk again."



Bill Broglie, Physical Therapist at New Beginnings

"We put her in the Unweighing System and have her walk over the Biodex Gait Trainer 3 treadmill. We have to advance her legs, but she glows when she's on it. She is up to 20 minutes walking non-stop, at .4 to .5 miles per hour. She's so happy. She has some return on her right quad and it's been like that for months. Since using the Unweighing System and walking on the treadmill, she is now moving her left quad. It's not consistent and it's not every day, but she is making steady progress. I'm hoping that one day she can at least transfer out of her chair and stand up with a walker."

Stroke Patient makes great strides through integrated approach to physical therapy on Biodex Equipment

Dennis is a 49 year old who suffered his first of three strokes when he was 41. "I've known Dennis for three years," says Broglie. "I met him initially when he was in another facility. Unfortunately, Dennis had regressed over the years prior to coming to New Beginnings. I think he may have had some falls there, so they wouldn't let him walk. When he first came to New Beginnings, he was so weak, he couldn't walk at all.

Dennis has been using the Biodex Unweighing System since coming to New Beginnings three months ago. He's so happy when he's using it. He feels very safe and I think that helps build a lot of confidence for someone like Dennis. And it motivates him as well.

Dennis also does a lot of his physical therapy on the BioStep to build up the synchronizing of his legs and helps them get stronger. Once he is able to weight-shift, he'll start using the Biodex Balance System.



Robert doing Body-Weight Supported Treadmill Training (BWSTT) using the Biodex Unweighing System and Gait Trainer.

The next steps for Dennis are to have him work more on the Gait Trainer 3 with support from the Unweighing System. While walking on the floor, we have to do 25 feet and then turn, which is good and bad, because you need more core strength and balance to do the turns. But if we get him on the Gait Trainer 3, we can get him to work on walking in straight lines, and build more endurance. Ultimately, Dennis wants to be able to drive again. Mentally, I think he is ready. That's half the battle. At the rate he's going, I'm sure he'll achieve his dream."

New Beginnings is on the front lines, mobilizing the healthcare community to help achieve an unprecedented TBI rehabilitation victory. And, Biodex equipment is working hand in hand to help them achieve that victory.

In just one year, the center has helped more than 5,000 people. Most of them with TBI, but others with acquired brain injuries—aneurysms, strokes, elderly people who have fallen, muscular dystrophy, autism, cerebral palsy and brain cancer.

"Our vision is to open more centers," says Scerri. "As far as I'm concerned, there should be a New Beginnings in every state. Life with disabilities doesn't end with the traumatic experience. It begins a new journey." And, as Scerri aptly articulates, "Everyone deserves a new beginning."

Biodex is always advancing our technology to serve you better.

NxStep™ Unweighing System
www.biodex.com/nxstep

Gait Trainer™ 3
www.biodex.com/gait

Balance System™ SD
www.biodex.com/balance

BioStep™ 2
www.biodex.com/biostep

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