

# I BELIEVE

BY PAM COBLER, ED.D.



Name: Pamela C. Cobler

Residence: Martinsville, VA

Diagnosis: Complete SCI level T6-7

Date of Onset: May 16, 2001

Height: 5'5"

Stander: EasyStand Glider

Standing in Glider Since: April 2005

Occupation: Tech Prep Consultant, President of Ms.  
Wheelchair Virginia Association

On May 16, 2001, I was injured in a motorcycle wreck where I sustained a severed spinal cord at T6-7, broken bones in my back from T3-10, collapsed lungs, and cracked ribs. Before my injury, I had been a part-time model, a kindergarten and third grade teacher, an adjunct professor at Patrick Henry Community College, and had served as the Director for the Piedmont Tech Prep Consortium at Patrick Henry Community College. I was born and raised in Martinsville, Virginia, and I loved to play sports and ride horses. On March 11, 2004, almost three years after my injury, I competed for Ms. Wheelchair Virginia and won the title. I had already earned a B.S. degree in 'Early Childhood Education', a Master's degree in 'Curriculum and Instruction', and I received my Doctorate Degree in 'Education Administration' with my thesis on disability and public education. Currently, I work as a Tech Prep Consultant, and also serve as President of the MWVA Board of Directors. When I was Ms. Wheelchair Virginia 2004, I had to choose a motto for the year. My motto that started that year, and remains with me today is "I Believe".



"I believe that I will walk again one day. I am focused on standing up and moving as much and as often as I can."



"Overall, standing has made me stronger, which makes all of my tasks easier."

### ON MY FEET AGAIN

I was only in rehab for two weeks, so I did not have a lot of time to stand. During the first week, my physical therapist asked me what my goal would be when I left, and I told her I wanted to be on my feet again. She put me in leg braces and I used the parallel bars, but as far as I knew, there was no standing equipment in the rehab gym where I was. The focus seemed to be on my upper body strength, and I quickly knew I wanted to focus heavily on the lower extremities that were not moving. Later, I learned about standing on my own. I made some calls to rehab facilities and talked with different professionals. Then I found out about the EasyStand Glider (I saw one at Commonwealth Medical Equipment in Richmond, Virginia), and I knew I needed one. Ultimately, I wanted to focus on wholeness, not just on movement above my level of injury, and that is what I have done using the Glider. The coolest thing I would like for people to know about the Glider is that it has helped me in all areas of my life.

### POSITIVE IMPACT ON SO MANY LEVELS

Before I was injured, I was physically very active and sociable. Standing has helped me continue to stay strong which has helped me feel better and feel whole. I can also talk to friends and family at eye level, and I am not sitting all the time. Also, since I feel better, I know I look better.

### STAYING HEALTHY AFTER INJURY

When I first started standing, I could only stand for approximately 30 seconds. I would have symptoms of nausea, faintness, and shortness of breath. My goals were to stand for 1-2 hours a day, breathe easily (my lungs were also damaged in the wreck), stay alert, and feel good. Using the Glider, I have reached those goals. I also stay healthy by reading about miracles, health, and success stories. I take communion often. I try to get outside in the sun every day when the weather is nice. I enjoy my family and friends.

### MAKING EVERYDAY TASKS EASIER

Overall, standing has made me stronger, which makes all of my tasks easier. In the Glider, I am able to get increased range of motion in my upper and lower extremities. This makes bathing, dressing, sleeping, using a manual wheelchair daily, and working easier and more functional. I maintain pretty good eating habits.

### STANDING FOR PAIN MANAGEMENT

The Glider helps me with pain management and I had a strong reminder of this yesterday when I had been sitting in my chair for about 14 hours and desperately needed some relief. My relief from pain is when I can stand and stretch, and relieve my back from the pressure. I have 12 titanium rods in my back. Sometimes I get "kinked" and the only relief comes when I am in the Glider. I have all other sorts of pain for which I take no medicine except Tylenol. Burning and tingling sensations below the level on injury 24/7, for example. I have found that standing is my number one pain reliever.

**CHALLENGE:** CONTINUING PAM'S HEALTHY ROUTINES AFTER HER ACCIDENT.

**SOLUTION:** THE GLIDER PROVIDES PAM WITH "ACTIVE STANDING", UPPER BODY STRENGTHENING AND LOWER BODY RANGE OF MOTION.

**CHALLENGE:** MAKING TIME TO STAND.

**SOLUTION:** MAKE STANDING A PRIORITY, OVER AND ABOVE OTHER THINGS THAT MIGHT TAKE YOUR TIME. IF NEEDED, TAKE SOMETHING ELSE OUT OF YOUR DAY, AND INSERT STANDING. INCLUDE STANDING IN YOUR ROUTINE, EVEN IF YOU CAN ONLY STAND FOR A SHORT TIME.

**STANDING PROGRAM:** ACTIVE STANDING  
1-2 HOURS A DAY  
5 DAYS A WEEK



“Staying in shape has always been part of my routine, so I have continued to make standing a goal.”



“I am very, very healthy, and I believe a majority of the reason for my continued progress and health is because of my standing program habit.”

## SPEAKING OF STANDING

Even though I have not traveled with my Glider publicly, I speak of it at EVERY presentation I give state wide and nationally. A medical equipment dealer brought the EasyStand to a presentation I was giving in Virginia to the Association of Recreational Therapists. I demonstrated the equipment to the therapists in Virginia, and I have been asked to do this again as a keynote speaker at their conference in June.

## STANDING FOR TOMORROW

I believe that I will walk again one day. I am focused on standing up and moving as much and as often as I can. Having the EasyStand Glider has been a miracle to me and an answer to my prayers. It sounds very serious and hopeful, but these are honest comments and honest feelings.

## MAKING STANDING A PRIORITY

Staying in shape has always been part of my routine, so I have continued to make standing a goal. I was always involved in sports -gymnastics, cheerleading, volleyball, swimming and horseback riding. Now, I use the energy and time for standing in the Glider. Since I have a flexible schedule, I do not have a certain or standard time for standing. I feel the best times are in the morning, or around 7 in the evening, when my stomach is empty. I have found that I cannot stand after eating. I also drink water while standing, which helps with breathing.

## MY ADVICE

I have all sorts of feelings and recommendations for people who might be challenged spiritually, physically, emotionally, or mentally. Some advice, in abbreviated words or statements, include: pray, stand, read or study about topics of interest, pick hobbies that you enjoy, get involved in a local church, volunteer, eat small portions of food, always believe, hope, forgive, and stay busy.

## I BELIEVE

For me, I believe standing has helped save my life. I am very, very healthy, and I believe a majority of the reason for my continued progress and health is because of my standing program habit. If a person does not have time to stand, then I recommend they take something out of the day, and insert standing. If a person has been recently injured, or if a person has been injured for a while and has not been standing, it will take some time and practice to maximize standing benefits. I am happier and healthier even if I can only stand (which also allows me to stretch) for 30 minutes at a time. Standing helps me with bowel and bladder issues, circulation, bone density, prevent skin breakdown, and helps my attitude tremendously. My reasons for standing are short term and long term. I want to give the message to my brain, that I am on my feet, and that I need my feet, ankles, knees, and legs because I am going to be using them again some day. I Believe!



### STANDING TIPS FROM PAM:

AVOID STANDING AFTER EATING  
DRINK WATER WHILE STANDING

**MEDICAL BENEFITS:** HELPS BOWEL AND BLADDER ISSUES, CIRCULATION, BONE DENSITY, PREVENT SKIN BREAKDOWN

**PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS:** IMPROVES ATTITUDE, CONFIDENCE, ALERTNESS, FEELING OF BEING “WHOLE”, TALKING TO FRIENDS AND FAMILY AT EYE LEVEL

**FUNCTIONAL BENEFITS:** STRENGTHENING UPPER & LOWER EXTREMITIES MAKES BATHING, DRESSING, SLEEPING, WORKING, AND USING A MANUAL WHEELCHAIR DAILY EASIER.

**LONG TERM BENEFITS:** ACTIVE STANDING SENDS A MESSAGE TO THE BRAIN THAT THE BODY IS STANDING ON ITS FEET AND MOVING ITS LEGS, HELPS KEEP THE BODY IN SHAPE FOR MEDICAL BREAKTHROUGHS.