



Imagine...life as you've known it, is suddenly, without warning, shattered...either by severe trauma, tragedy, or a grim prognosis. Your health and well-being, which is so commonly taken for granted, is now replaced with fear, unease, distress, and mounting questions of where to go and what to do next. Sadly, this scenario happens to people hundreds of times each day.

But sustaining a debilitating injury or being diagnosed with a chronic illness is no longer the bleak sentence it has been thought to be. Through continued therapeutic exercise, individuals suffering these conditions can enhance the quality of their life and minimize the risks of secondary complications.

*“Without C.O.R.E., there is no opportunity for me to progress”
~ Tom Bolewski, C-4/5 Quadriplegic, injured in January 2008*

A Remarkable Opportunity

Unfortunately, when people are given a “one-in-a-million” chance to be independent or to improve their diagnosis, they focus on the million and not the one. These individuals succumb to the destructive, predictable effects of disability or illness therefore being more susceptible to secondary complications that furthers the degenerative cycle of chronic conditions.

C.O.R.E. (Center of Rehabilitative Exercise) is leading the paradigm shift in which people will learn that with hard work and dedication one can challenge and improve their condition and overall quality of life. These individuals will learn to focus on what they can do, rather than focusing on what they cannot do. C.O.R.E. provides individuals like Tom Bolewski the opportunity to maximize his potential.

On January 20, 2008, Tom and his son's were enjoying a great day of dirt bike riding, a past time they loved sharing with one another. In an instant, Tom was thrown from the bike while in 4th gear at high speed, landing head first on an embankment over 10 feet away. He hit hard and immediately Tom's body went numb. His back was broken at the thoracic level 7 with swelling in the spinal cord at cervical level 4 &5, prognosis - quadriplegia. His doctor told him that he would never have motion below his neck ever again.



After five weeks of rehabilitation, Tom's insurance company further validated what the doctor said and stated that he had regained as much function as he could and that they would no longer cover his rehabilitation costs. In April 2008, Tom met Clinical Exercise Physiologist, Taylor-Kevin Isaacs. It took all the strength that he had, but Tom raised his index finger and shook Taylor's hand.



Tom began working with Taylor on a regular basis and on January 15, 2009, he pedaled a NuStep recumbent stepper for the first time. Tom had limited movement in his legs but had regained significant amount of feeling. Through working with Taylor, Tom has reversed the degenerative cycle and is seeing functional improvements. After only a few months of therapeutic exercise, Tom has already surpassed his initial diagnosis. He still has much further to go, but he pushes himself each and everyday hoping that he will take his first steps for the second time in his life.

Tom is one of numerous stories of how continued therapeutic exercise has helped individuals enhance their quality of life and minimize their risk of secondary conditions. To understand C.O.R.E. and the "Power of Possibility," you only need to hear the story of Amateur National Motocross Champion Aaron Baker, the co-founder of C.O.R.E.

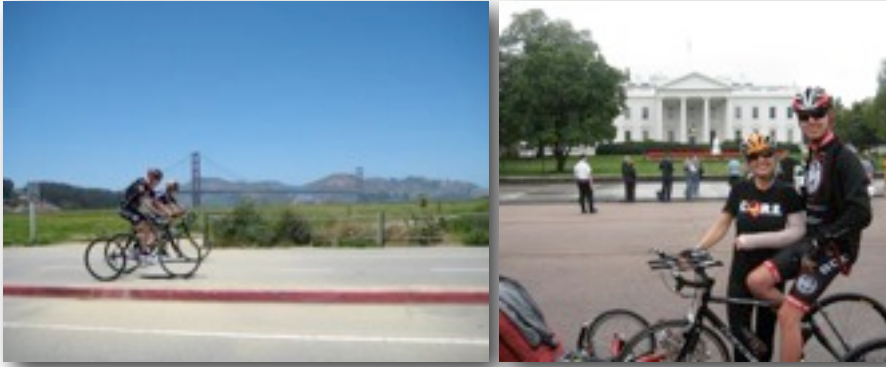
HISTORY OF C.O.R.E.

Aaron Baker had been a champion motocross racer since he was five years old, but on May 26, 1999, his life would be forever changed. While testing a bike, Aaron approached a jump, just as he was about to take off, the bike malfunctioned, launching Aaron over the handle bars. Aaron's neck was broken, rendering him a complete quadriplegic at the C-4/5/6 levels. A few days later, Baker experienced respiratory failure and flat-lined for forty-three seconds. The initial prognosis was that Aaron had a "one-in-a-million" chance of ever regaining any type of function below the neck. One year after sustaining his injury, Baker's insurance company deemed that he had recovered as much function as possible despite being confined to an electric wheelchair and not being able to perform basic functions such as brushing his teeth, bathing, or feeding himself.

Aaron was not willing to give up and neither was his mother, Laquita Conway, who had been at his side since his injury. Together they found Taylor-Kevin Isaacs, a Clinical Exercise Physiologist and Professor of Kinesiology at California State University, Northridge. Aaron approached Taylor while in his electric wheelchair, raised his weakened arm as much as he could, looked Taylor in the eye and said, "I am Aaron Baker, I have heart, I have drive, and motivation. I was given a "one-in-a-million" chance of ever functioning again." Taylor responded, "Great, let's focus on the one and not the million."



Taylor and Aaron started working together on a rigorous life-enhancement program including exercise therapy, diet, mental conditioning, and body recognition. Slowly, Aaron limited his degeneration and began to regenerate his muscles and strengthen neurological pathways from his brain to the rest of his body. Aaron regained the ability to brush his own teeth, feed himself, and bathe himself. In 2007, Aaron, rode on a tandem bicycle from San Diego, CA to St. Augustine, FL. One year later, on September 27, 2008, Aaron Baker was not only walking under his own power, but he became the first quadriplegic to ride a bicycle across the United States (from San Francisco to Washington D.C.) under his own power!



Aaron's cross country ride was named the "Rise Above Tour." Through his recovery process and his tour, Aaron's vision of helping others became a reality. While riding cross-country in 2007 and again in 2008, Aaron shared his story at hospitals, rehabilitation centers, with U.S. Veterans, and at schools. The "Rise Above Tour" was

not about setting records, it was not about personal achievements, it was not about Aaron; it was about inspiring others of the "Power of Possibility" and raising awareness of the absolute necessity for ongoing therapeutic exercise.

"It is hard to ponder what the consequences have been from the lack of a place I could go to receive ongoing therapeutic exercise outside of the hospital; and how much more my recovery may have progressed if I did not face the long lapses of time in between my allotted rehab visits from my insurance company, which eventually ceased.

*C.O.R.E. will be able to remove the question,
What If I was able to exercise more, would I have regained more abilities?"*

~ Andrew Skinner, C-4/5/6 Quadriplegic

WHAT IS C.O.R.E.?

C.O.R.E. exists to provide opportunities of life-enhancement for individuals with debilitating injuries or chronic illness and their families by providing continued therapeutic exercise, psychological support, and access to community partnerships. C.O.R.E. is a nonprofit organization that provides individuals with said conditions access to continued therapeutic exercise at low cost and access to specialized equipment, highly trained professionals, and a supportive community. The foundation of C.O.R.E. will be an 11,000 sq. ft. facility located in the San Fernando Valley, which contains an exercise area, resource center, health bar, private consulting rooms, and office space. At C.O.R.E. highly trained therapeutic exercise clinicians will provide low-cost individualized life-enhancement programs for each member. Complimenting these life-enhancement programs are opportunities to utilize family therapy services provided by the American Jewish University, a resource center which provides information about various opportunities for individuals with debilitating injury or chronic illness, and the opportunity to utilize specialized equipment at hours that are convenient to the member.

C.O.R.E. will utilize the methodologies of award winning Clinical Exercise Physiologist, Taylor-Kevin Isaacs. The base philosophy of C.O.R.E. is that therapeutic exercise is an absolute necessity in the management and improvement of said conditions. Furthermore, it reduces the risk of secondary complications and degenerative changes that typically follow debilitating injuries or chronic illness. These beliefs are supported by research which has found, "Adherence to exercise is important for individuals with SCI (disability and chronic illness) since they are at increased risk for various secondary conditions."ⁱ Furthermore, research has found that those individuals with debilitating injury that had participated in physical activity had reported significantly less pain and a higher quality of life.ⁱⁱ

C.O.R.E.'s programming will include progressive/personalized evaluations, individualized treatment plans, nutritional guidance, personal and family counseling, caregiver training, massage therapy, recreational activities, and social networking opportunities through a comprehensive resource center. C.O.R.E.'s greatest asset is its members who challenge the "Power of Possibility" daily.

THE NEED FOR C.O.R.E.

Since 1928, the assumption among medical professionals has been that the Central Nervous System is hard-wired, non-malleable, and incapable of repairing itself. For 80 years this has been the belief of medical professionals; they have promoted the message of adapting to a condition rather than working to improve it because of a study conducted in 1928. Recently, advances in neuroscience are opening new doors of opportunity in recovery after spinal cord injury or other debilitating conditions.ⁱⁱⁱ It is clear that physical therapists need to shift their paradigm from adapting and compensatory therapies to progressive, ongoing rehabilitation.

*“The nervous system is responsive to input and can learn after injury”
~ Andrea Behrman, Neuroplasticity After Spinal Cord Injury and Training:
An Emerging Paradigm Shift in Rehabilitation and Walking Recovery*

Another challenge to rehabilitation is cost. According to the 2006 U.S. Census 20 percent (one out of every five people) of the population has a disability. Of the 20 percent, 95 percent cannot afford the cost of care thus becoming more susceptible to life-threatening secondary complications including pneumonia, pulmonary emboli, cardiac arrest, bladder infection, and other serious conditions. It is estimated that 500,000 people in Los Angeles County have a disability and less than 5,000 have the funds for ongoing treatment.^{iv}



Most individuals with debilitating injury or chronic illness cannot access a standard gym, such as LA Fitness or 24-Hour Fitness. They require specialized equipment and individualized instruction. Facilities that provide these services do exist, however many cost between \$2,000 and \$5,000 per month. Other facilities that exist might be more affordable but do not provide individualized instruction. Furthermore, the majority of facilities working with people with disabilities or chronic illness provide immediate or acute care only. C.O.R.E. will support individuals with their continued life-enhancement programs and will provide support whenever an individual needs, for the rest of their life.

Chronic illness and disability continue to be at the forefront of medical research. Whether it is cancer research, stem cell research, quality of life enhancement, or any other research on disabling conditions, billions of dollars are spent each year. The overwhelming majority of this money is allocated to finding a cure. A cure is an important goal, however for those currently affected by a debilitating injury or chronic illness, a lack of opportunities to enhance their quality of life currently exists.

It is promising to know that the Obama administration is promoting government funding of Stem Cell Research, which might expedite the ability of scientists to find a cure. However, should a cure be found, many of the individuals that could benefit, would not because their bodies would have sustained so much damage or degeneration that they would first have to rebuild their bodies before a cure would be useful.

“For a cure to be efficacious, therapeutic exercise must be part of the treatment plan both before and after administered treatment.”

~ Dr. Hans Keirstead, Ph.D. Reeve-Irvine Research Center at the University of California, Irvine

THE HEART OF C.O.R.E.

C.O.R.E. will achieve its mission by providing:

- A Fitness Center with unique and specialized equipment
- Comprehensive initial evaluations
- Frequent progress evaluations
- Clearly defined short term, long term, and ultimate goals
- Personalized therapeutic exercise plans
- Nutritional Consultations
- Massage Therapy
- Independent access to C.O.R.E. facilities
- Opportunities to hear various motivational speakers
- Volunteers for various needs of clients
- Education and Research Opportunities
- A thorough, inclusive, and accessible Resource Center
- Caregiver Enhancement Training

Fitness Center with Specialized Equipment

As stated earlier, individuals with a debilitating injury or chronic illness cannot easily access the equipment at a traditional fitness center and require the use of specialized equipment. C.O.R.E. has allocated 7,500 sq. ft. to serve as the primary area for fitness and therapeutic exercise equipment.

Personalized Therapeutic Exercise Plans

When individuals meet with physical or occupational therapists, there frequently is a one-size fits all plan. A C-4 quadriplegic is given the same exercise plan another C-4 quadriplegic. An individual that suffered a stroke will be treated similarly to another individual that suffered a stroke, despite their muscles working differently, or their tolerance for pain being different. No two individual's bodies work exactly the same; their exercise plans must be developed to meet the needs of that one person. Through his own rehabilitation and his 18 years of experience, C.O.R.E. Chief Clinical Exercise Physiologist, Taylor-Kevin Isaacs understands the importance of creating a unique program for each client. Isaacs will educate his team of clinicians on how to develop specialized plans for each client and provide them the time and support necessary to help them maximize the effectiveness of their exercise plan. C.O.R.E. believes and embodies the fact that the "Process is the Progress."



These personalized exercise plans are developed in small steps. The goal of therapeutic exercise is to improve function, independence, and self-efficacy and minimize secondary complications and degenerative changes that typically follow physical disability or chronic illness. Clients learn to remove the concept of time from their exercise plan and follow the interactive spectrum which begins with degeneration, moves to regeneration, then health and wellness, then fitness, and continues to performance. If one sets the initial goal as performance, their goal will be difficult and nearly unattainable. For example, an individual that sustains a broken leg will be forced to minimize the use of their leg for an extended period of time. Their ability to exercise will be limited and their muscles will atrophy and their stamina will decline. Eventually, they will be able to exercise again, but at a much reduced level compared to prior to their injury. The individual's first goal will be to exercise and limit the degeneration of their body and begin to rebuild their body. Once they begin to regenerate, they can then focus on enhancing their health and wellness. Once they are able to live a healthy life, then a person can maximize their fitness by beginning to attain fitness related goals. Finally, they will no longer be working towards attaining goals, they will be achieving them, and they will be performing. For someone with a spinal cord injury, taking their first steps for their second time in their life might be the performance, but ultimately they must begin by stopping their muscles from atrophying and degenerating.

*“My therapy has helped me face this challenge and improve my strength, balance and overall health as I work to gain a full recovery...It takes a certain skill and expertise to understand and work with this type of injury and a place like C.O.R.E. is a necessity.” ~ Troy Brown,
Bi-lateral C-5 spinal cord injury.*

Nutritional Consultations

Proper nutritional care is critical to maximizing the effectiveness of each therapeutic exercise plan. Regardless of ability, the body requires a certain diet to function properly. This diet is different for each person but general nutritional guidelines can be applied to everyone. C.O.R.E. will utilize the knowledge of nutritional specialists that will help each client maximize their progress. The C.O.R.E. facility will include a health bar which will provide basic needs to assist clients in maximizing the efficiency and impact of their exercise programs.

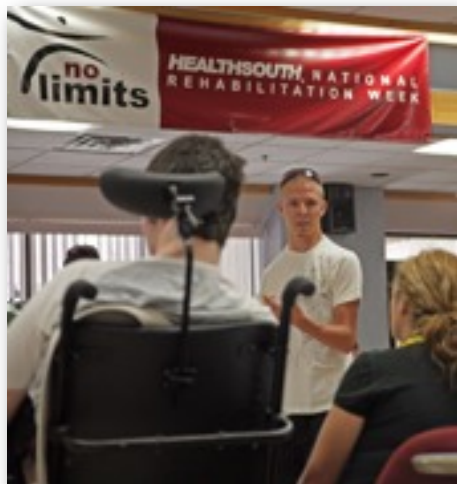
Massage Therapy

Massages are often viewed as a luxury to relax muscles or relieve stress. To individuals who have sustained a debilitating injury or chronic illness, massage therapy is critical to stimulating muscles and nerves. The Touch Research Institute at the University Of Miami School Of Medicine has conducted extensive studies on the positive effects of massage therapy and how it enhances the ability to regenerate the neurological system. Massage therapy can also work to reduce spasms which can have an adverse affect on the exercise therapy program.^v It is also common for muscles to tighten if they are not used or if they are overused. If muscles spasm or tighten, it can greatly reduce the effectiveness of therapeutic exercise; massage therapy allows the muscles to remain loose and relaxed to maximize flexibility.

Independent Access to C.O.R.E Facility

Many disability focused exercise facilities only allow clients to utilize their equipment when they are working with a physical therapist. C.O.R.E. will provide equipment that clients can use on their own time, when it is convenient for them. They will not be limited to only using the equipment when they meet with a therapeutic exercise clinician; they will be able to access the equipment at their discretion and maximize regeneration and minimize degeneration, as in any other normal gym environment. The ability to provide access to specialized equipment when it is convenient for the client provides members of C.O.R.E. a unique opportunity not offered at most therapeutic care centers. Volunteers with knowledge of specialized equipment will also be available to ensure all equipment is being utilized correctly and will also be able to assist clients should they require help using any of the equipment.

*“Hospital rehabilitation taught me how to live in a wheelchair – getting out of one was never mentioned.”
~ Mike Fritschner
Surfers Myelopathy*



Opportunities to Hear Various Motivational Speakers

Mentoring and motivation can inspire an individual to maximize their progress. Out of 100 people surveyed, 83 stated that another individual inspired them to live again despite sustaining a debilitating injury or being diagnosed with a chronic illness. These individuals also stated that they often receive inspiration from their peers or individuals with similar conditions that continue to persevere despite their condition. The opportunity to meet some of these individuals or hear about the process which led to their performance can help others continue with their process. These presentations also provide social networking opportunities for members of C.O.R.E. in addition to creating new partnership opportunities.

Volunteers for Various Needs of Clients

In addition to the aforementioned equipment specialists, volunteers will be utilized to assist clients with various needs outside of the C.O.R.E. facility. C.O.R.E. may coordinate groups to attend programs and will utilize volunteers to help people attend these programs. It is believed that C.O.R.E. will be able to develop a partnership with Access Paratransit to maximize the ability of individuals to utilize the C.O.R.E. facility at any time. C.O.R.E. will also develop an internal shuttle service to maximize the number of individuals that can access the facility.

Education and Research Opportunities

C.O.R.E. will be creating a medical advisory committee which will provide the opportunity to document the process and progress of each client. C.O.R.E. intends to record this information and provide qualifiable and quantifiable data to medical journals and magazines. It is hoped that the information gathered from documenting the process and progress of C.O.R.E. clients will help individuals understand that therapeutic exercise improves function, independence, and self-efficacy and minimizes the risk of secondary complications and degenerative changes that typically follow debilitating injury or chronic illness. C.O.R.E. wants to be a leader regarding therapeutic exercise, but understands the need to share their program with others.

A Thorough, Inclusive, and Accessible Resource Center

When an individual sustains a debilitating injury or a chronic illness, they are not sure where to turn for information or opportunities. There is a veil of darkness that is pulled over them and it is difficult to find opportunities for guidance and support. Because people do not know what opportunities exist, they create their own support network or organization. They often recreate something that already exists and begin competing for funds with a similar agency. C.O.R.E. intends to develop a resource center which will include funding information, insurance information, program opportunities, fitness opportunities, socializing opportunities, psychological therapy support, and other necessities. C.O.R.E. will remove the veil of darkness. C.O.R.E. intends to partner with initial and acute care facilities and let them utilize the resource center that is being developed. The more opportunities an individual is given reduces the likelihood that they will feel isolated and suffer depression or feel lost and hopeless.^{vi}

Sadly, most organizations in the disability and chronic illness community fear similar organizations. They view them as a competitor rather than embracing them as having a similar mission and working together to find ways to enhance the quality of life of individuals with various debilitating conditions. C.O.R.E.'s resource center will be one tool that will help not only individuals in need but also help these organizations shift their views of competition and inspire them to embrace cooperation.

“With access to a C.O.R.E. facility and the expertise of trained clinicians, I would have avoided 30 years of a downward spiral in my ability to function. The prescribed treatment for my condition was knee replacement and prescriptive anti-inflammatory medications. With continued therapeutic exercise, I am walking and living relatively pain free...without surgery.”

~ Susan Sorenson ~ advanced degenerative joint disease – right knee

Caregiver Enhancement Training

Caregivers usually learn one method of assisting the person they are helping. Furthermore, caregivers are often overlooked and under appreciated. Through C.O.R.E., caregivers will know that they are appreciated and be able to participate in focus groups and share their specialized knowledge, best practices, and recommendations on how to better care for their clients. They can also receive training on how to help their client perform basic exercise and stretching techniques at home which will increase their progress. Caregivers will also be able to take advantage of psychological support and have opportunities to relax and recover from their stressful jobs.

“Having a C.O.R.E. facility would be beyond words. I know I would have a place to go where the equipment is highly accessible and very beneficial to my specific needs. I would be able to surround myself with other people in similar positions that are working hard to overcome their challenges.

I would inspire and be inspired.”

~ Mike McNamara sustained a six-inch blood clot in his spinal cord in 2003

HOW YOU CAN PROVIDE LIFE-ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

To develop the initial Center of Rehabilitative Exercise, it will cost \$2,000,000. The cost includes facility costs, equipment costs, staff costs, and operational costs. This is the amount necessary to guarantee that C.O.R.E. will be successful and sustainable. This will allow C.O.R.E. the opportunity to build its membership base and begin examining ways to reach its vision of establishing a C.O.R.E. facility in every major city across the United States.



“I know I speak for Mike, as well as his entire and extended loving family, when I emphatically state that a C.O.R.E. facility would be the best of all possible ‘worlds’ for Mike and other SCI, stroke or other similar catastrophic injury clients/patients.

A C.O.R.E. facility would become the front-runner for the ‘true’ as well as ‘model’ therapeutic environment.”

~ Robert McNamara

Father of Mike McNamara who sustained a C-7 spinal cord injury.

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