

In A Single Moment, Everything Can Change

On a hot, humid summer Monday in July 2009, Keri Erb, a 17-year-old high school senior, and her friends were enjoying one of the last days of their summer vacation by swimming at a remote spot on the Pequea Creek in Lancaster County. As Keri climbed a tree and reached for the rope to swing over the water, something went wrong - Keri fell 25 feet down the side of a gorge. During the course of her fall, she had suffered broken vertebrae in her neck, four broken ribs and a head injury. Several boys swimming nearby came to Keri's immediate aid; they prevented her from drowning and wrangled the rescue ropes to lift her from the gorge. Keri was airlifted to Lancaster General Hospital (LGH).

That afternoon, Jean Erb received the call that no mother wants to get from prehospital personnel. She was told to go immediately to Lancaster General Hospital. Upon arrival, Jean was taken to the trauma unit. Keri was in bad shape – she was intubated and unconscious, but her family was just thankful that she was alive. The trauma team, an integral component of emergency services at Lancaster General Hospital, provided the immediate surgical intervention needed to reduce Keri's likelihood of permanent disability.



Lancaster General Hospital is an accredited Level II Trauma Center meeting the Pennsylvania Trauma System Foundation standards. The team of highly qualified trauma physicians, nurses and technicians provided state-of-the-art care to Keri. Two days after her accident, Keri regained consciousness. Keri relied on the expertise of her LGH nurses and therapists to help her re-learn how to breathe and swallow independently before she could begin therapy at a rehabilitation hospital.



Lancaster General Hospital has a new operating room (O.R.) dedicated to trauma patients like Keri. This spacious, well equipped O.R. offers the latest imaging equipment which immediately sends the images to the radiologist and surgeon who will treat the patient. More than one surgical procedure can be performed at a time, the room can function as an open heart O.R. and the room has a broad temperature range for patients who may become hypothermic prior to admission.



Lancaster General Hospital offers the only accredited Level II Trauma Center in Lancaster County. In 2008-2009 Lancaster General served over 1,306 trauma cases.

“We are so glad that they airlifted Keri to Lancaster General Hospital,” said Jean. “First impressions are everything, and from the moment we arrived there, they took exceptional care of Keri and us. Dr. Lee and Dr. Rogers openly shared with us the positive and negative aspects of Keri’s condition. Dr. Kager, her neurosurgeon, kept us up to date as Keri progressed. Her nurse even stayed after her shift to make sure that Keri was handed off for testing in an efficient manner – she was phenomenal.”

Two months after her accident, Keri has made a full physical recovery. She is still working to improve her memory and cognitive skills, but she plans to return to high school very soon. When asked what made the difference in Keri’s care experience, Jean comments, “Time and skill were critical elements in Keri’s trauma care success, and I am so thankful for everyone who helped in Keri’s rescue and recovery. I am so glad that Lancaster General was there when we needed it the most.”

Our Foundation’s Mission

The Lancaster General Health Foundation’s mission is to advance the culture of philanthropy to support excellence in patient care and services throughout the Lancaster General Health system. The purpose of our Foundation is to provide internal grants and funds to provide quality patient care, keep pace with medical advancements and technologies, and continue to meet the need for new and specialized services to benefit the families living in our community.