



A patient completes shoulder strengthening exercises as Brian, a Christ House Homeless Respite Care Assistant, provides guidance and encouragement.

help patients complete these assignments by demonstrating exercises, coaching for appropriate technique, counting repetitions, and providing encouragement.

By monitoring these exercises, we can also update the therapist on the patient's progress so that the treatment plan can be adjusted appropriately and the patient can recover more quickly.

We may also provide aids for mobility – such as a cane, wheelchair, walker, or crutches – and offer instruction on how to safely use them. Mastering the proper use of these aids helps to prevent further injury.

For example, if a patient is using a wheelchair for the first time, he may need to be shown how to safely transfer himself from his bed into the wheelchair.

Rebuilding Bodies through Rehabilitation

Through physical and occupational therapy, we help patients reach for independence once again

Many patients come to Christ House after surgeries, amputations, or long hospital stays which caused a loss of strength, endurance, or range of motion. These individuals need to be guided through rehabilitation to rebuild strength and balance so that they can live as independently and fully as possible.

We send patients who are in need of extensive rehabilitation to an outside physical or occupational therapist. These therapists develop a treatment plan which often includes daily, at-home exercises. These exercises strengthen and stretch muscles and joints and build overall endurance.

For instance, a patient who undergoes an amputation must build strength and balance to best use his new prosthetic leg (See Figure A on next page). Our Homeless Respite Care Assistants

“As patients get stronger and stronger physically, their whole outlook improves.”

About a third of our patients use a walking aid during their stay at Christ House. We monitor use of these aids and increase or decrease support as appropriate to both ensure safety and



The mission of Christ House is to provide comprehensive and compassionate health care to sick, homeless persons in the District of Columbia, and to assist them in addressing critical issues to help break the cycle of homelessness.

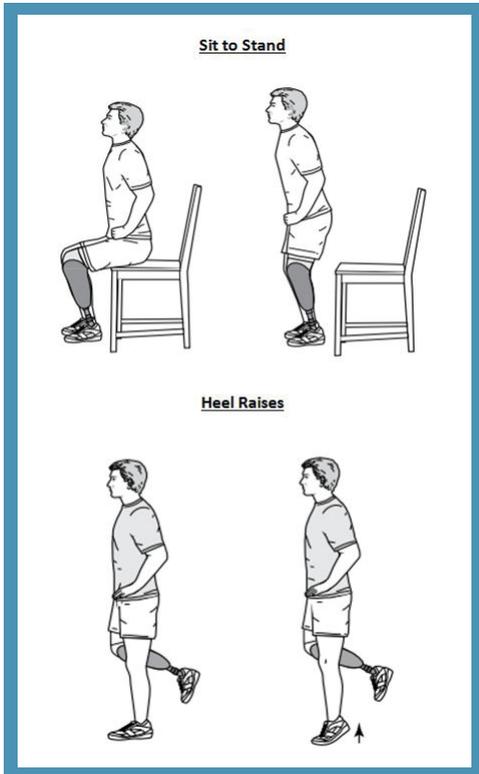


Figure A: Exercises for an amputation, from patienteducation.osumc.edu

Continued

allow a patient to rebuild muscle and promote independence.

We also provide “energy conservation” education which helps a patient to schedule his day so that he can complete important activities like bathing and light movement before becoming too tired. Energy conservation also includes developing a resting schedule and learning how to breathe optimally when doing strenuous activities.

Often times, when a referral to an external therapist is not necessary, our medical team may prescribe a rehabilitation program for patients who would benefit from this guidance. This might include an assignment to walk a certain amount each day, cold therapy to help with inflammation, heat therapy to promote muscle lengthening, or

exercises for strength and mobility.

One of our nurses, Meredith, said that she has seen such significant progress in patients after a few weeks of staying at Christ House. They often arrive weak and demoralized, but after receiving care and putting in their own hard work, they are transformed, inside and out. She observed that “as patients get stronger and stronger physically, their whole outlook improves!”

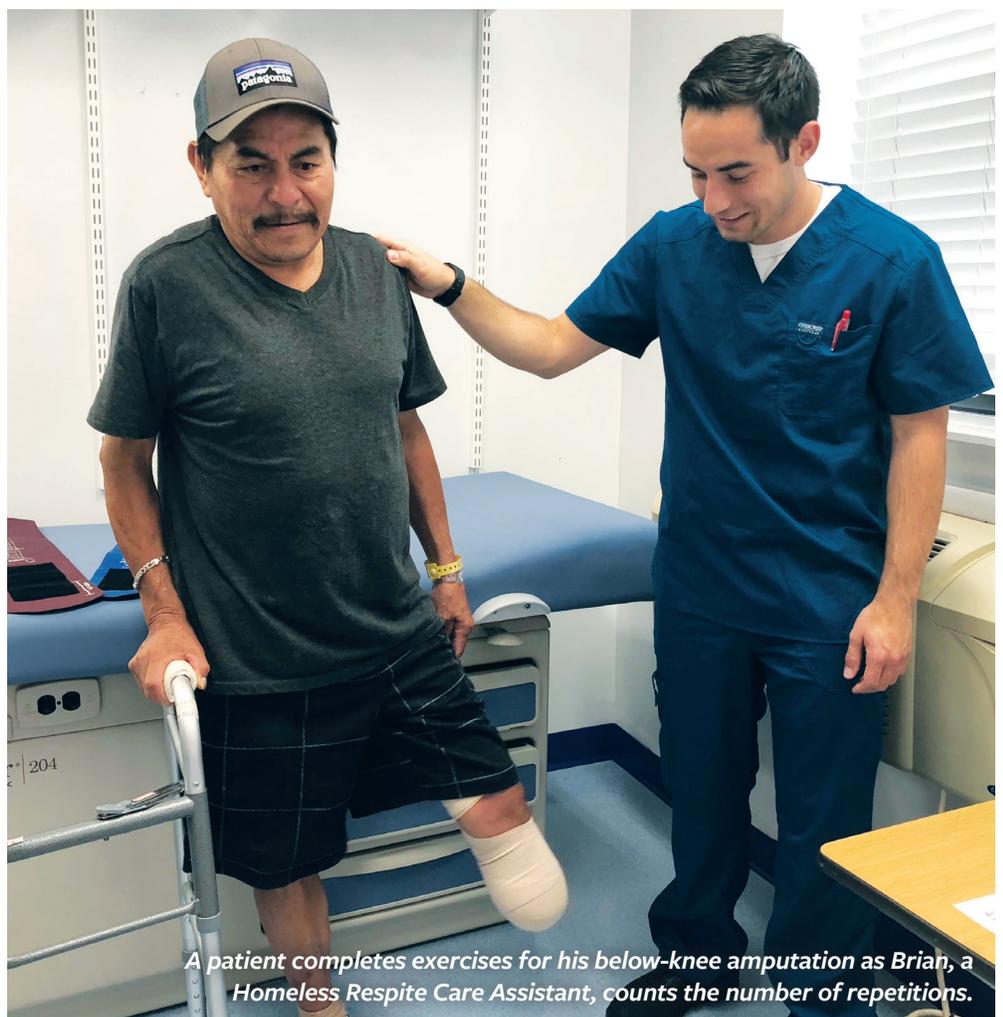
Willie, a recent patient, benefited from several rehabilitation interventions while he was here. He came to Christ House after a lengthy hospital stay for a foot infection that was further complicated by heart and lung issues.

The first few nights he was with us, he wanted to sleep in his wheelchair

because he couldn’t breathe easily when lying flat on his bed. So, we ordered an adjustable hospital bed so that we could raise the head of his bed and make it easier for him to breathe.

To help Willie regain his strength and endurance and encourage deep breathing, two of our staff helped him walk with his walker twice a day. Because of his heart condition, we also scheduled daily bed rests to help him conserve his energy. We also coached him through exercises in his bed and chair to maintain his range-of-motion and improve strength.

By following this treatment plan, which was designed for his unique needs and abilities, Willie was able to live more comfortably and regain strength, dignity, and hope.



A patient completes exercises for his below-knee amputation as Brian, a Homeless Respite Care Assistant, counts the number of repetitions.

Welcoming new friends to our community

Our new year-long volunteers arrived in June and jumped right into their roles at Christ House. We're excited to introduce them to you:

Sarah is serving a second year as the Case Management Assistant. She helps patients obtain public benefits, such as health insurance or Social Security, and other social services, including mental health treatment and legal support.

Caroline, Alyssa, and Brian are serving as Homeless Respite Care Assistants. They are assisting patients with activities of daily living, recording vital signs, performing dressing changes, and more.

Eric is serving as the Clinical Unit Assistant. He is the first point of contact for everyone who enters the medical unit. He also assists with daily organization and health information management on the nursing unit.

We are so thankful that these five compassionate and talented men and



From left to right: Sarah, Caroline, Alyssa, Brian, and Eric

women are choosing to spend a year both serving and learning from our patients.

In addition to working at Christ House, they live together in intentional community at Emmanuel House. They share their varied experiences at Christ

House, discuss relevant social justice issues, and challenge each other to grow, all in a supportive environment. Past volunteers have called this year "life-changing," and we wish nothing less for these new friends.

Cook up some kindness

Make a difference at Christ House by lending a hand in our kitchen! You can volunteer individually or with a group:

- **Food Services Volunteer** - Assist with preparation, serving, and cleanup after meals on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. Monday-Sunday: Breakfast: 7:00-9:00am, Lunch: 11:00-1:00pm, Dinner: 5:30-7:00pm
- **Meal Groups** - Help to prepare and serve meals and assist with clean-up. Meal groups can further support our mission by providing ingredients or fully prepared meals to be served. Guidance on menu planning is available from our Executive Chef.

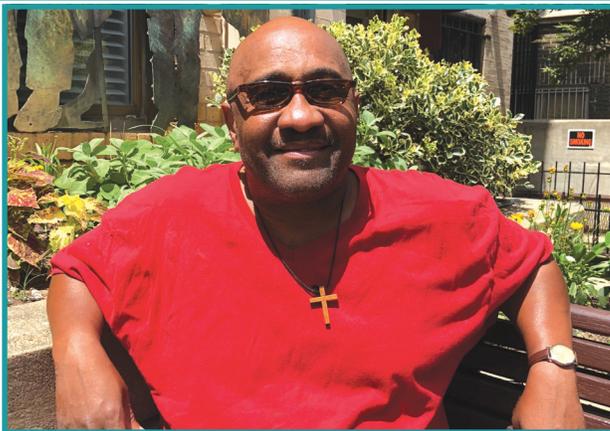
You can find the individual and group volunteer applications on our website:

www.christhouse.org/volunteer

Volunteers fill a vital role in our community. We couldn't do what we do without their love and hard work!

A volunteer sets the table for Table Fellowship.





Summertime needs

It's hot and sunny outside and our patients need **100% UV protection sunglasses** and **16oz+ reusable water bottles** to enjoy their time on our patio and on their trips to and from medical appointments. These practical gifts say, "We care about you." Donations can be dropped off, mailed, or purchased through our Amazon Wish List. More details at:

www.christhouse.org/donate/inkind

New look, same mission

You may have noticed this newsletter got a little makeover! We've freshened up our look so that our mission - providing healing and hope for homeless persons - is clear and compelling.

Just as we evolve to meet the changing needs of our patients, we are making sure that we communicate with you, our growing community, in the best way possible. We are so grateful for your faithfulness as we press forward in this important work together.



Christ House

HEALING AND HOPE FOR HOMELESS PERSONS

Be sure to check out our updated website and visit us on Facebook  and Instagram  !

The Advance 
Advancing hope in Christ's name
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Christ House 

