Hands for Health

Student-run clinic enhances learning and community connections

By Dan Digmann

In unrehersed unison, Caitlyn McPherson and Allison Warsinske count Nancy’s repetitions as she completes her bridging exercises on the mat table.

“Seven ... eight ... nine ... 10,” and the two physical therapy doctoral students applaud their client’s determination for completing a routine that will help her regain some function following a recent stroke.

“Great job, Nancy,” McPherson says as she helps her relax in the CMU Health Professions Building’s physical therapy lab.

On this day, student physical therapists will provide physical therapy to as many as 10 clients through Hands for Health. This CMU student-managed weekly clinic serves members of the greater Mount Pleasant community.

Cory Arnold is a third-year physical therapy student from Shelby, Ohio, who is completing his term as Hands for Health president.

“This volunteer clinic is a great way to get experience, but it’s also a great way to give back,” he says.

Cory Arnold, president of Hands for Health, says the clinic provides valuable experience for students while meeting health needs in the Mount Pleasant community.

Recovering from an injury can be a tough journey, and that’s why Brandon Lorenz is determined to make it the best journey possible.

After working for others in the physical therapy field with subpar customer service and generic treatment, Lorenz set out to improve the culture and patient experience.

Lorenz and his business partner, Patrick Hoban, founded Probility Physical Therapy, a manual-specialized therapy clinic, in 2004.

Since then, it has grown to a staff of about 55 with locations in Ypsilanti, Clinton, Saline and two in Ann Arbor.

“We had a vision and a passion to bring physical therapy to a new level,” he says.

The Probility PT team treats patients with a holistic approach, often using manual therapy techniques in the assessment and treatment of physical conditions affecting muscles, joints, nerves and fascia.

The offices are filled with smiling faces, a coffee bar, snacks and artwork to “space up” the normal clinic atmosphere.

Lorenz says the positive environment can ease the stress associated with treatment.

“I absolutely love helping people,” he says. “I have also always been very active and health conscious, so my job is a combination of my two passions.”

Lorenz graduated from CMU in 2000 with a bachelor of science in health rehabilitation.

He earned his master’s degree in physical therapy from Nova Southeastern University.

“CMU grads know their stuff. They’re ahead of the game,” says Lorenz, who is known to hire and mentor alumni of his alma mater.

Outside of the office, he teaches seminars nationwide on physical therapy techniques.

CMU alum’s PT firm focuses on holistic approach

138

Doctor of Physical Therapy students completing clinical rotations during the 2012-13 academic year

25

Doctor of Physical Therapy students currently volunteering at Hands for Health

100%

Percent pass rate for all 2012 Doctor of Physical Therapy students taking the National Physical Therapy Exam

1998

Year Hands for Health began serving community members

100%

Percent job placement rate for all Doctor of Physical Therapy program graduates