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25-Year-Old Gaylord Hospital Patient Shares Inspiring Story of Rehab and Persistence in This Week's *People Magazine*

September 4, 2018, Wallingford, CT - Gaylord Hospital patient, 25-year-old Jillian Harpin of Wolcott, CT shares her story of courage, "I Won't Let Being Paralyzed Stop Me" in this week's edition of *People Magazine*, available on national newsstands from Friday, August 31st through Monday, September 10.

[A link to the online version of the People Magazine article can be viewed here.](#)

Jillian Harpin was on vacation in Mexico two years ago when she lost her balance while sitting on a third floor balcony railing while talking on the phone. She was told that she would never stand or walk again. Paralyzed from the waist down, she came to Gaylord Hospital in Wallingford for rehabilitation.

"There was a lot of uncertainty," Jillian recalled to a Gaylord representative. "I was scared that I'd never drive a car, have a relationship, or feel the crunch of leaves under my feet."

Part of Jillian's inpatient therapy included walking in the Ekso Bionic exoskeleton, an activity she continues in her outpatient care at Gaylord. Every week, Jillian logs thousands of steps through Gaylord's corridors. The physical benefits to its users are many including improved circulation and bladder function and increased bone density. But for Jillian, the greatest benefit of all is the feeling of freedom.

"Having face-to-face conversations with my friends is liberating," she said. "When I am in Ekso, I can't stop smiling!"

Since her injury, Jillian has been on a mission to "try out as many different 'impossible' tasks that people wouldn't expect to see from someone in a wheelchair" and credits Gaylord Hospital for helping her regain the physical strength and confidence needed to crush her goals.

"I'm driving, working, dating, I've been to concerts. I've gone skiing, waterskiing, tried wheelchair archery and basketball and even finished a half-marathon!" she said.

Most recently, Jillian's Gaylord physical therapist encouraged her to consider participating in the Gaylord

Gauntlet 5K & Obstacle Run this past June. At first she was skeptical. But always ready for a challenge, Jillian conquered the 2018 Gaylord Gauntlet and its 24 manmade and natural obstacles with the support of a team from the Gaylord Sports Association.

“It’s crazy to think that in such a short time, I’ve gone from my normal life ... to the lowest point ... to basically back to where I was before, if not better!”

About Gaylord Specialty Healthcare:

Gaylord Specialty Healthcare, headquartered in Wallingford, Connecticut is a not-for profit, 137-bed specialty hospital that provides care and treatment of people with complex medical and intensive rehabilitation issues. Gaylord also operates outpatient therapy centers in Wallingford, North Haven, and Cheshire. For latest news or more information go to www.gaylord.org.

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