



# News Release

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March 13, 2006

*For immediate release:*

## **Foundation annual appeal nets funding for gait system**

*Fort Atkinson* – The generosity of area individuals seemingly knows no bounds. Funds raised from the Fort Memorial Hospital Foundation 2005 Annual Appeal Campaign were used to purchase a LiteGait partial weight bearing gait and balance therapy system. This new device is a welcome addition to the Fort HealthCare Therapy & Sport Center outpatient clinic in Fort Atkinson.

The LiteGait equipment allows a single therapist to move a patient weighing as much as 350 pounds from a seated position to the proper upright posture. The patient is kept in a comfortable position, supported by a sling that prevents falls. This enables both the patient and the therapist to concentrate on the therapy session much earlier in the rehabilitation process.

Physical therapist and licensed athletic trainer Julia Neppl is pleased to have the equipment available. “We’re very excited to have the LiteGait here to help our patients. It provides a safe place to work on walking and balance. I get to use my hands to facilitate movement- not just hold the patient.”

The ability to physically support an individual while they exercise their legs is especially useful when treating persons who have had strokes, joint replacement surgeries or have neurological disorders. The wheeled base is designed to fit over most treadmills or can be used for over ground walking. When patients are ready to practice the skills they have learned, the equipment can be smoothly pushed over ground, preventing falls and reducing the fear of falling.

“Julia was instrumental in getting this piece of equipment for us. We are really lucky to have employees so actively involved in providing the latest technology for our patients,” said Kim McCrea, director of rehabilitation services. “And, a huge thank you to the foundation for their support,” she added.

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**Photo caption:** Fort HealthCare Therapy & Sport patient Tom Sehnert demonstrates how the LiteGait partial weight bearing gait and balance therapy system is used. Julia Neppl, PT, LAT assists Tom with this activity.

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