

Your Contributions Change Lives: Emma's Story

On May 5, 2018, Emma Bailey was a typical 18-year old girl – just finishing her senior year of high school and preparing for a bright future as a new college student at Meredith College. That day, a tragic car accident flipped her Jeep into a light pole and she suffered a massive spinal cord injury that left her completely paralyzed – just weeks before her high school graduation.



Over the next 14 weeks, Emma and her family learned to call WakeMed their unexpected new “home,” where Emma received life-saving emergency department care, intensive care and months of inpatient rehabilitation at WakeMed’s Rehabilitation Hospital. Two weeks before high school graduation, her WakeMed care team started working behind the scenes to arrange for Emma to attend her high school graduation. Amidst intensive treatment schedules and a roller coaster of the ups and downs of recovery, Emma was remarkably able to attend her graduation from Nash County High School in person – with help and support from her new WakeMed family.

Since Emma was discharged on September 4, 2018, she has been attending WakeMed’s Outpatient Rehab therapy four days a week at the WakeMed Health Park. Here, one of the foundational elements of Emma’s therapy has been the use of an innovative robotic eksoskeleton designed to help spinal cord injury patients relearn to walk.

Known as the EKSO, this revolutionary device has helped Emma make incredible strides improving her core strength, confidence and balance over the past year. WakeMed Rehabilitation’s EKSO is one of only three such devices in North Carolina. There are less than 150 in the United States and just over 260 in use worldwide.

WakeMed’s EKSO device was funded by the WakeMed Foundation and made possible by incredible donors like you, who are committed to helping patients improve and restore their health and wellbeing.

*“The first time I saw Emma
“walk” in the Ekso, I will never
forget how happy I felt to see her up
and walking, rebuilding her core
strength, muscles and bones. This
life-altering therapy has given her
confidence and strength, as well as
motivation and achievable goals she
can strive for. I am beyond thankful
that the community has supported
the Foundation so Emma has access
to this incredible treatment option.”
Janet Bailey, Emma’s mother*

