

May, 2011

Hi I'm Sharon Holz. I have congenital Cerebral Palsy due to my premature birth fifty-two years ago. I consider myself very blessed because I see myself as able to achieve most things I put my mind to and I enjoy a full life.

Ten years ago due to my age and natural deterioration I became wheelchair bound and my C.P. was starting to affect the quality of my life. Pain became the focus; it stopped me from doing so much. I would have to spend a lot of time in bed to try and get relief from chronic lower back pain.

My Orthopedic Surgeon suggested hydrotherapy as a last resort as he couldn't do any more for me surgically.

In May, 2010, I began hydrotherapy at Port Kembla Hydrotherapy Unit. The physio started me with low grade strengthening exercises at the side of the pool. I also walked with a lot of aid. It was slow progress but being a non swimmer I was very wary of the water.

In mid October, 2010 I attended McKeon's Swim Centre in Unanderra. I kept up the routine of exercises and I could feel my confidence grow along with my self esteem but most importantly with the help of the teachers I pushed through that comfort barrier and to my amazement found out I could walk without help, and float without help.

I cried tears of joy that day. It felt so fantastic to be walking in the water, something impossible for me to achieve on land.

Since that day I have become stronger in my limbs, my core strength has improved, my range of flexibility has increased, and my pain levels have decreased.

The benefits of hydrotherapy were being realized big time!!

McKeon's are so keen to see people with a disability reach their potential whatever that may be, without their encouragement I probably wouldn't be where I am now.

The pool was closed over the school vacation and in those two weeks I was miserable. My pain levels increased, my limbs became stiff it was hell.

On a positive note in March this year I had to return to Port Kembla Hydro pool for my swimming assessment. The physio was gob smacked when he witnessed such an improvement. I was so proud of myself and thrilled he could see such a difference in my progress.

My hydrotherapy has become the highlight of my week. Physical therapy is crucial to those born with Cerebral Palsy. The warm water does so much for ease of movement thus helping to maintain mobility.

I tell everyone I meet about the amazing benefits of Hydrotherapy and I will keep telling my story in the hope it may help others in my situation.

My Hydrotherapy sessions would not have been possible without assistance from the following people: Community Options, Greenacres Respite Options, my swimming carer, the McKeon's Swimming Teachers and staff team at the Centre.