Cheerleader performs despite cerebral palsy, thanks to wearable electrical stimulation device

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Lafayette, CO, January 8, 2013 – 20-year-old Tiffany Trujillo is living her dream of cheering for the Denver Broncos despite seemingly insurmountable odds.

Born at just 26 weeks, weighing only 1.8 pounds, Trujillo became legally blind due to retinopathy of prematurity (ROP), an abnormal blood vessel development in the retina of the eye in a premature infant, and her parents were told she would never be able to talk or walk. At six months old, she was diagnosed with cerebral palsy (CP), which resulted in severe weakness in both of her legs, including a condition known as “foot drop”. Trujillo’s parents refused to put limitations on their daughter’s abilities and made sure Trujillo received extensive speech therapy and participated in physical therapy seven days a week. Trujillo eventually learned to talk, but her gait was still impaired.

However, a small medical device the size of an iPod is now helping to change that. Trujillo was recently fit with WalkAides by clinician Donald Brandt of Hanger Clinic. Worn around the calf, just below the knee, the WalkAide uses electrical stimulation to combat foot drop and restore mobility to people with CP, traumatic brain injury, multiple sclerosis, stroke, and incomplete spinal cord injury.

Since being fit with the WalkAide, Trujillo has increased energy and strength. Not only is she able to navigate Sports Authority Field at Mile High much easier when she takes the field as a Junior Denver Broncos Cheerleader, she is also better able to keep up with her fellow cheerleaders. Trujillo now runs a lot quicker, can jump, and finds the WalkAide makes it easier to participate in and teach ballet at F.R.I.E.N.D.S of Broomfield, an organization for individuals with developmental disabilities. Trujillo hopes to one day open her own dance studio for people with all ability levels.

Trujillo recently spoke to her local FOX television station about the WalkAide and what a difference it is making in her life. Following is the resulting news story: http://kdvr.com/2012/12/20/electronic-device-allows-woman-to-perform-with-junior-denver-broncos-cheerleaders/.

Clinical data – The National Institutes of Health (NIH) conducted the first study ever examining children with CP and the WalkAide. Preliminary results showed the WalkAide significantly restores walking ability in children with CP by notably improving ankle control during walking. More information can be found here: http://phx.corporate-ir.net/phoenix.zhtml?c=98837&p=irol-newsArticle&ID=1638728&highlight=.

How the WalkAide works – The WalkAide applies low level electrical currents directly to the peroneal nerve (i.e. the motor nerve that controls the movement of the ankle and foot), prompting a muscle contraction which lifts the foot at the appropriate time during the gait cycle. The device uses an embedded accelerometer, which is similar sensor technology to that used in Wii video gaming systems, to determine the appropriate timing for stimulation with every step.

About Hanger Clinic: Founded in 1861 by the first amputee of the Civil War, Hanger Clinic, a business unit of Hanger, Inc. (NYSE: HGR), owns and operates 23 patient care clinics in Colorado and 700+ nationwide. The certified clinicians of Hanger provide patients with the latest in orthotic and prosthetic solutions, including microprocessor devices for those with limb loss and neuromuscular technologies for those with paralysis due to stroke, MS and other debilitating conditions. For more information, visit www.hanger.com.

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