Meet Jan Delariman
Delariman has always been interested in health care. He started twelve years ago as a personal trainer and ultimately received his master’s degree in occupational therapy. With his undergraduate degree in psychology, Delariman is proud that OT had its beginnings in psychiatry wards a century ago. “Occupational therapy started by getting the psychiatric patients to bathe and dress. The patients felt better about themselves; they felt human again.”

Today Delariman’s work focuses on arm, hand, and shoulder injuries; but the field of OT is broad and the name often misleading. “Occupational therapy is not just working with someone so he or she can go back to work. It’s about improving any meaningful daily activity – paying bills, putting on deodorant, driving a child to school. It’s about independence.”

Practicing at home (not just at therapy sessions) is one key to success. “Those who do best take therapy into their own hands and explore their capabilities. They go beyond what I tell them – within reason,” he adds. “We can’t make the patients do things, but we can give them choices. We can help them reinvent themselves realistically.

“One of my most amazing patients has suffered repeated injuries and illnesses. But after every surgery, she reinvents herself – again and again. Each time, she finds a way to live her life based on where she is now.” Delariman pauses. “There is always a way to adapt. There are always choices.”

April Is National Occupational Therapy Month

Prayer: Keep my hope alive, God of Grace. Help me remember that you have a plan for me. For today, let me not lose heart. Amen.

Related to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the United Church of Christ (www.advocatehealth.com)