

Business spotlight: Pawleys speech pathologists help patients progress beyond therapy

BY JAY RODRIGUEZ JRODRIGUEZ@POSTANDCOURIER.COM

DEC 2, 2020



Amanda Barclay is the owner of Align Speech Therapy in Pawleys Island.

COURTESY PHOTO

PAWLEYS ISLAND — What if our main form of communication, our speech, was taken away by an illness or injury?

What happens if the pathway from the brain to what you say is suddenly interrupted?

That's when [Align Speech Therapy](#) of Pawleys Island steps in. At Align Speech Therapy and Consulting, owner Amanda Barclay and her team helps people align what they think with what they say through the company's "accessible, effective, and functional therapy services."

"Communication and swallowing and cognition are things we take for granted until they are impacted and if you have a lesion to the brain, depending on what area of the brain is impacted, it's going to potentially take away your ability to speak," Barclay said. "And you're going to have to relearn that and establishment the motor planning for your brain to send the message to your muscles to produce sound and to put words together and to think of words."

In undergraduate school, Barclay found a love for teaching, but knew she didn't want to get into education. She found a love for medicine, but didn't want to go to medical school.

She met someone who was in speech pathology and found a way to merge both of those loves into a career.

"I remember very clearly all of the initial patients that I worked with," Barclay said of her graduate school experience. "A young woman who suffered a brain injury after an ATV accident. A 70-year-old man who had a stroke and was non-verbal. Those patients just stuck with me so clearly and I found so much reward in helping those individuals regain the ability to remember their own personal information or to communicate with their family and their loved ones or their grandchildren. It was so meaningful that it has driven me on that career path."



MYRTLE BEACH AREA NEWS

Small business spotlight: Cooper House offers weddings, special events in Myrtle Beach

BY JAY RODRIGUEZ JRODRIGUEZ@POSTANDCOURIER.COM

Barclay has worked in the field of medical speech-language pathology for nearly 20 years. She and her two staff members, Alexis Magoto and Ann Kakuda, all have Certifications of Clinical Competence by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

She had always dreamt of owning her own practice, becoming a reality in 2018.

“I always thought that things could be done differently,” Barclay said. “When you work in hospital settings and when you’re dealing with insurance, there’s a lot of regulations and red tape that you have to go through. I’ve always wanted to provide more person-centered care that is more individualized to the needs of the client that I’m working with.”

One of those ideas came to fruition thanks to a grant Align was awarded through the [Parkinson Voice Project](#). The grant was able to fund The LOUD Crowd, an extension of the SPEAK OUT! Therapy program Align already offered for people with Parkinson’s Disease.

All of Align’s SPEAK OUT! graduates are invited to transition to the LOUD Crowd after discharge. Barclay said it was something Align was able to do at no cost to participants and without billing insurance.

“I actually started the LOUD Crowd prior to receiving this grant,” Barclay said. “The LOUD Crowd was developed to help them maintain and continue progress that they made in therapy.”



FEATURES

Small business spotlight: Sea Island Trading features jewelry, clothing, handbags and more

BY JAY RODRIGUEZ JRODRIGUEZ@POSTANDCOURIER.COM

She said sometimes when a client is discharged from services, everything falls to the wayside. With Parkinson’s being a degenerative disease, a client could see digression within a month without therapy, Barclay said.

“This really helps them be successful and to continue what they’ve learned in therapy,” Barclay said. “And it’s fun and it’s engaging, and during this time of COVID, I’ve been told many times by the participants that it helps them with a

sense of normalcy... Many of these people were not leaving their home at all, not even for groceries, not for medical appointments, so it really helped them not feel so socially isolated.”

Align always offered online therapy, but its popularity didn't start growing until after April 30 of this year when Medicare started reimbursing for online therapy services.

That's when Barclay reignited her online services and gradually worked to a hybrid service where her staff would go back to the homes of clients, depending on the needs of the patient, their comfort level and the needs of the family.

Barclay said early intervention is key, and Align has the capacity to train families and to work with individuals who may have an early dementia diagnosis or mild cognitive impairment diagnosis. She said many typically wait to seek any type of services until they are really debilitated by that disease.

“As soon as you start noticing those little changes and the ability to think of words and the ability to remember information that is when you need to seek services because that is when you feel the capacity to learn and to learn strategies and to learn new routines and to empower yourself to delay the regression or even prevent severe regression from happening.”

Barclay said families shouldn't always wait for a physician before they take action for a family member who could be experiencing early symptoms.

“Some physicians will follow a wait-and-see approach,” Barclay said. “But I think it really is beneficial for people to seek services sooner than later because they could just be more successful and get a greater outcome.”

JAY RODRIGUEZ

REPORTER

Jay has been in the communication industry for more than 20 years, having spent half of his career in the Myrtle Beach area. He can be reached at (843) 834-0419. Follow him on Twitter at @JayRod_MB.