

Many people ask me how I keep up with everyday life. I comment that relearning activities of daily living has been a continual process requiring a major amount of time and commitment. I seek opportunities to be as involved in the community and my family as I was prior to my accident. Being involved in these family and community activities is how I define a dignified and quality life. Below I have documented some of the various accomplishments, community service, advocacy and recognitions representing how I have been “Rolling with Dignity” throughout my life and since my accident.

Exercise Awareness in the Community

I attend an adaptive fitness class at the UW & enjoy it. I have participated in the adaptive swimming and canoeing classes. This article, “Class Helps Injured, Disabled Stay

Fit”, was written the first semester I had attended this class. My increased health due to continued participation has motivated me to seek out support to develop and start an aerobic adaptive fitness class for persons in wheelchairs. I am working with a Madison organization to do just that. The first class is planned for March or sooner.

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Tim Gattenby helps Monica KamalRossa on a bike in an adaptive fitness class

Class Helps Injured, Disabled Stay Fit

The Capital Times :: LIFESTYLE :: 1B
Monday, November 12, 2001
By Debra Carr-Elsing The Capital Times

... Toe clips on a stationary bike [or wrapping the shoes with ace bandages around the peddles] in Gattenby's class recently allowed Monica KamalRossa, who has a spinal cord injury from a skiing accident earlier this year, to manually move her legs for the first time since the accident. Her excitement was heard throughout the gym as her arms did the "pedaling" with handles on the upper cycle.

"I'm working real hard to increase my upper trunk strength because it's got to take care of everything now, and I want to get back to normal life," says KamalRossa, who lives in Madison with her husband, Bob Rossa, and their two sons, ages 9 and 12.

KamalRossa was very active before her accident - coaching soccer, earning a black belt in the martial arts, and swimming and biking with her family. "Having the opportunity to get strong again in a safe, positive environment will help me do all of those things again with my family even though I happen not to be able to walk anymore," she says.

Next semester, she plans to join Gattenby's swim class. ...

<http://www.madison.com/archives/read.php?ref=/tct/2001/11/12/0111120060.php>

Dignity with Cooking and Friends

I enjoy entertaining and cooking. I learned this during my travels. I was a high school exchange student in Turkey and later returning during college I lived in Istanbul for a semester. During one college summer, I had visited Jordan, Israel, and Palestine and my additional travels prior to my injury included living in Amman, Jordan where my younger son, Nader, was born. Having learned how to stuff grape leaves and zucchini along with enjoying Turkish coffee or Arabic tea amongst my friends and family, I work hard to duplicate the flavors and hospitality found in the Middle East. This “Look What’s Cooking” article discusses some of the barriers I have worked to overcome so I can continue my cooking & entertaining hobby.



Wisconsin State Journal :: DAYBREAK :: D1
Monday, May 20, 2002 - Paige L. Graham For the State Journal

Monica KamalRossa has found a way to meet challenges, such as how to enjoy garlic without the lingering aftermath. She cooks with a lot of garlic in her Turkish and Middle Eastern recipes. Then, to get rid of the garlic taste, she either drinks Arabic coffee with cardamom spice or eats cardamom seeds, tricks she learned while living in Jordan for three years.

KamalRossa also lived in Turkey while teaching at a private Turkish school, where she also picked up many original ethnic recipes that she cooks for friends and family, including husband Bob Rossa and sons Nader Kamal, 9, and Yazan Kamal, 12.

"My kids and I went to a company picnic one year and (they) got excited when they thought they saw a big bowl of hummus, thinking I shared the recipe. It was potato salad instead and they were disappointed," she said.

Her time in the kitchen suddenly slowed in January 2001. She had a skiing accident while chaperoning her sixth-grade son's school ski trip. She was paralyzed from the breastbone down and has used a wheelchair ever since.

"I really miss being independent in the kitchen," she said. "However, I still entertain, but instead of a seven-course meal, I've had to reduce it to a three-course meal." She also has to do more planning. "I can have Bob get things out of the freezer and set up the cooking space," KamalRossa said.

The biggest hurdle she faces is not having an easily accessible kitchen. She sets the chopping boards on a TV tray, because the counters are too high, and she keeps spices in easy-to-reach containers. She is always looking for ways to make her less dependent on others in the kitchen. She has, for example, found a tool that allows her to operate the stove, even though the knobs are against the back. (continued...)

Hummus

- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice combined with lime juice
- 2-3 garlic cloves, pounded or finely chopped
- 3 tablespoons of tahini (sesame seed butter)
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 can of garbanzo beans or chickpeas (water drained separately and reserved)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Finely chopped mint or sweet paprika (optional garnish)

In a food processor, combine juice, garlic, tahini, cumin and salt. Process until smooth. Add half of the garbanzo beans and process until smooth. If too thick, add the water from the garbanzo beans by the tablespoon and process until smooth. Add the remaining garbanzo beans and process until smooth. Taste and add lemon or salt as desired.

Put hummus in a shallow dish and garnish with mint or paprika. Spoon olive oil over the top. Serve as a dip with warm pita bread.

Tabbouleh

- 3/4 cup cracked wheat (bulghur), soaked in 1 cup cold water and 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice until bulghur is soft
- 1 cup finely chopped fresh parsley
- 1/4 cup finely chopped fresh mint (optional)
- 5 green onions, finely chopped
- 2 medium tomatoes, finely chopped
- 1/2 cucumber, finely chopped
- 1/2 sweet bell pepper, chopped (optional)
- 1 garlic clove, pounded or finely chopped
- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3 tablespoons olive oil

After the bulghur is soft, drain thoroughly by pressing down with the back of a spoon. Mix the drained bulghur and remaining ingredients. Serve with hummus and warm pita bread.

Baba Ghanouj

- 1 large or 2 medium eggplants
- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice combined with lime juice
- 2-3 garlic cloves, pounded or finely chopped
- 3 tablespoons tahini (sesame seed butter)
- 1/2 teaspoon cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper (optional)
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon plain natural yogurt (if needed)

- Finely chopped mint or sweet paprika (optional)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil

Slit the skin of the eggplant. Bake in the oven on top of open aluminium foil or a cookie sheet until completely soft when poked by a fork, about 30-40 minutes. Allow it to cool, then spoon out all of the soft part of the eggplant. Chop it into pieces.

In a food processor, combine the juice, garlic, tahini, cumin, cayenne and salt. Process until smooth. Add half of the eggplant and process until smooth. If too thick, add a tablespoon of plain natural yogurt. Add the remaining eggplant and process until smooth. Taste and add a bit more lemon or salt as desired.

Put baba ghanouj in a shallow dish and garnish with mint or paprika. Spoon olive oil over the top. Serve as a dip with warm pita bread.

- Favorite gadget: Food processor.
- Comfort food: Pita bread with plain yogurt (preferably homemade), and chocolate ice cream.
- Favorite seasoning: Allspice, garlic, parsley.
- Kitchen disaster: "It's happened more than once -- I burn the rice."
- Culinary fantasy: "To cook in a kitchen where I was not dependent on anyone to hand me things, etc. To cook like I used to."

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Volunteering in the Education System

I have been a volunteer in the Madison Metropolitan School district since we moved to Madison. As my sons are in high school now I am part of the West High School PTSO -

<http://www.Madison.K12.Wi.Us/West/Ptso.Htm>

I helped develop how the PTSO changed its way of keeping the West High community informed of upcoming events and important news. I established two listservs through Yahoo Groups: [West PTSO@yahoogroups.com](mailto:West_PTSO@yahoo.com), for PTSO news and the discussion group listserv [WestHigh-Discussion@yahoogroups.com](mailto:WestHigh-Discussion@yahoo.com).

I have also developed West High's initial Small Learning Community and the Regent Boys' Tennis Site Web Site:

Monica as PTO co-President at a Silent Auction for a Madison School



Coach: John Wheeler
Email: johnmwheeler@charter.net

Other coaches:
Ryan Fleming - rfleming@wisc.edu
Tom Storvik - storvik@wisc.edu
Rehan Mirza - mirza@wisc.edu
Gordon Ridley - gtridley@wisc.edu

West High

2006 Regent Boys' Tennis

Varsity JV & Varsity
(click to enlarge picture above)

[Varsity Schedule \(.pdf\)](#) | [Freshman Schedule \(.pdf\)](#) | [2006 Pictures](#)

Check here for updates:

- ◆ Thanks to the photographers for submitting the start of [2006 pictures](#). Keep them coming!
- ◆ [Stoughton Rec. Dept. Tournament Flyer](#)
- ◆ Also, a late report on how the JV did at Conference:

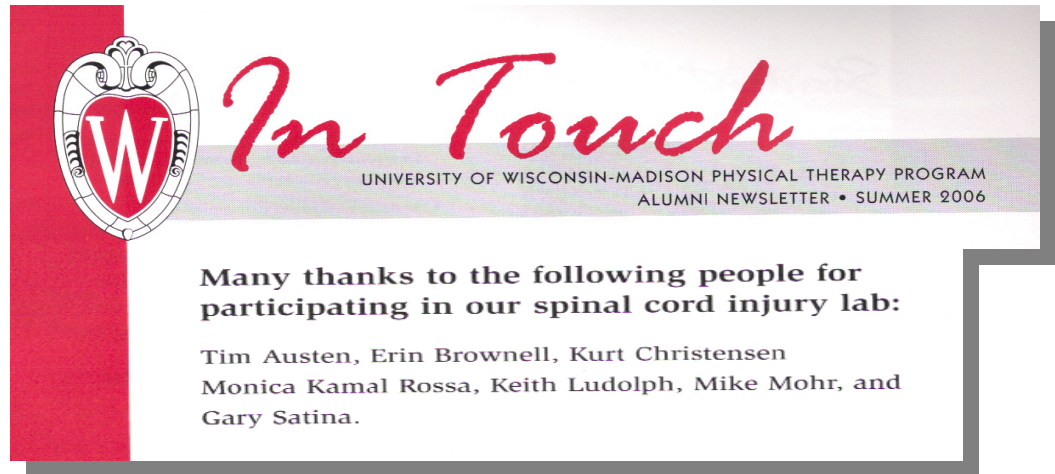
Here's the report: Congratulations to the West High JV who won the conference JV tournament! Brian Geniesse took first place at #1 singles; Scott Dyke took second place at #2 singles; Alex Graf took second place at #3 singles; and Tyler Matzinger took second place at #4 singles. In doubles, Spencer Niess and Tom Ver Hoeve took second place at #1 doubles; Arthur and Warren Clauss took first place at #2 doubles; and Chris Han and Matt Van Winkle took first place at #3 doubles. Great play by all...and from my eye-witness reporter I hear that there was good sportsmanship and great enthusiasm! Way to go Regents!

And good luck to our Varsity as they move on to their matches this week!

www.RossaDigitalDesign.com/RegentBoysTennis

Community Service

As community service is important, I have strived to use my formal education, work experience, and SCI knowledge to help others. One of my annual activities is to help Physical Therapy graduate students. I participate in one of the clinics so they can ask questions about my injury, hospitalization, physical & occupational therapy, and other SCI issues.



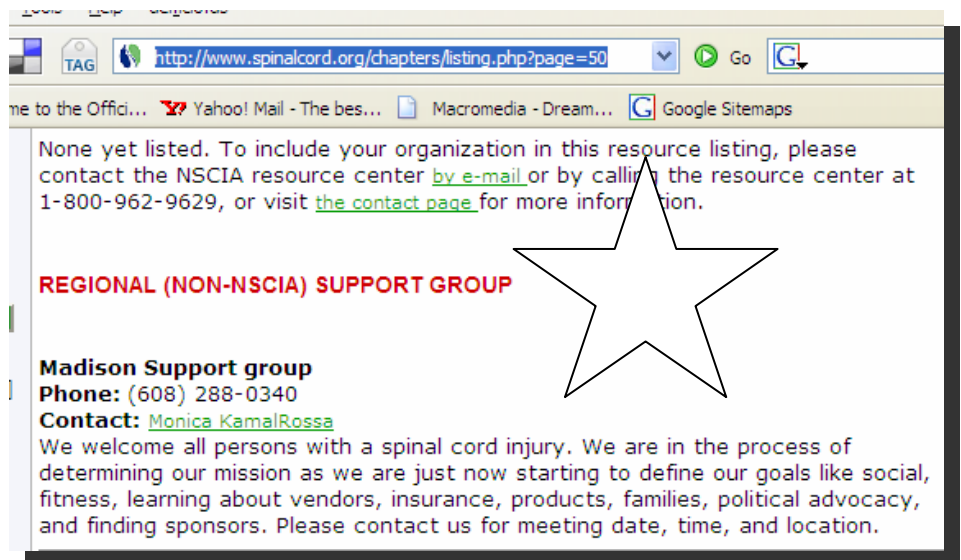
<http://www.orthorehab.wisc.edu/pt/academic/index.shtml>

Techworks

I have been a volunteer with TechWorks. With this organization, I can use my education and work experience to help others with disabilities. This organization is a collaborative effort of the Madison Area business Community, Madison area Educational Institutions and the State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. The mission is to help individuals with a disability to develop and refine skills to enter the information technology field.

Local SCI Group

I have been a Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) mentor with new SCI patients from two of the hospitals in Madison. I meet with new patients & answer questions they or their families may have. I have felt the need to set up a new SCI group in Madison for a couple of years, as one hasn't existed in Madison since before my injury. That is changing now as we have had two successful meetings!



<http://www.spinalcord.org/chapters/listing.php?page=50>

Community Service - Advocacy

One of my friends contacted Bill Lueder's to ask him to interview me about some of the issues around handicapped parking. After talking he agreed to meet me so that I could explain how so many people including the drivers with disabled parking tags do not pay attention to the lines marked out for no parking. I can describe many situations where I have been blocked in and had to wait for the driver, a tow truck, or help to move my vehicle so that I can get to an appointment or just get into my van.

WATCHDOG | Bill Lueders

Hey! You can't park here!

Some violations that affect people with disabilities may owe to a lack of awareness

Monica KamalRossa says it happens to her about once a week. Sometimes, there's no place to park because the disabled spots are all taken, on frequent occasion by people who are apparently not disabled. And sometimes people—even other disabled people—park in the diagonal lines adjacent to disabled stalls, blocking space KamalRossa needs for her van's wheelchair lift.

"I think a lot of it is a lack of awareness," says KamalRossa, a Madison resident who has used a wheelchair since a skiing accident in early 2001.

Most irksome is when KamalRossa returns to her car, perhaps in a hurry to pick up her kids or get to work, only to find someone parked on the diagonal lines, blocking her out. On these occasions, she's had to summon security or police. A few months back, she was parked in at a local restaurant, and the manager refused to announce the plate number, saying he didn't want to disturb his customers.

"I took my wheelchair and went through [the restaurant] yelling, 'Who has license plate number...,'" recalls KamalRossa.

Sgt. Mark Brown, who oversees parking for the Madison police, says disregard of disabled parking rules is "a big problem." Most commonly, this involves "abuse and fraud"—as when family members continue using the disabled plates or permits of deceased relatives. But some violations are unwitting: "We see a lot of people who don't realize the striped area is for wheelchair access."

In addition to Madison police and parking enforcement officers, the city has for the last year had a team of about 15 specially trained citizens who report apparent violations to Brown. He says their efforts have already resulted in "60 citations and well over 100 warnings."



MARY LANGENFELD

Like other disabled parkers, KamalRossa needs the marked access area to exit and enter her vehicle.

Neither police nor members of this Disabled Parking Enforcement Council are permitted to quiz parkers who have no apparent disability. But they can jot down plate or permit numbers for Brown to check out. "When somebody's dead, that's a pretty big giveaway," he deadpans. Other situations are less clear-cut, which is why some citations are later rescinded. Says Brown, "The legitimate person will get ahead of me."

Among the city's citizen enforcers are Sue Morovits and her husband, who have a disabled son. Since May, the couple have reported nine violators, most for not having the requisite permit or plates. In two cases, they found vehicles with outdated permits; in another, a temporary permit that had been expired for more than a year.

Morovits has also faced situations, including one earlier this month, where she could not use her van's wheelchair lift because someone had parked on the diagonal lines. "I don't think people realize," she says, noting that even she was unaware of some relevant rules until she received the enforcement training. Now she's glad to be able to take action against a problem that affects her directly: "I feel good when I can write up someone who abuses handicapped parking."

6 ISTMUS | OCTOBER 31, 2003 | THEDAILYPAGE.COM

Isthmus, October 2003.

Educational Accomplishments

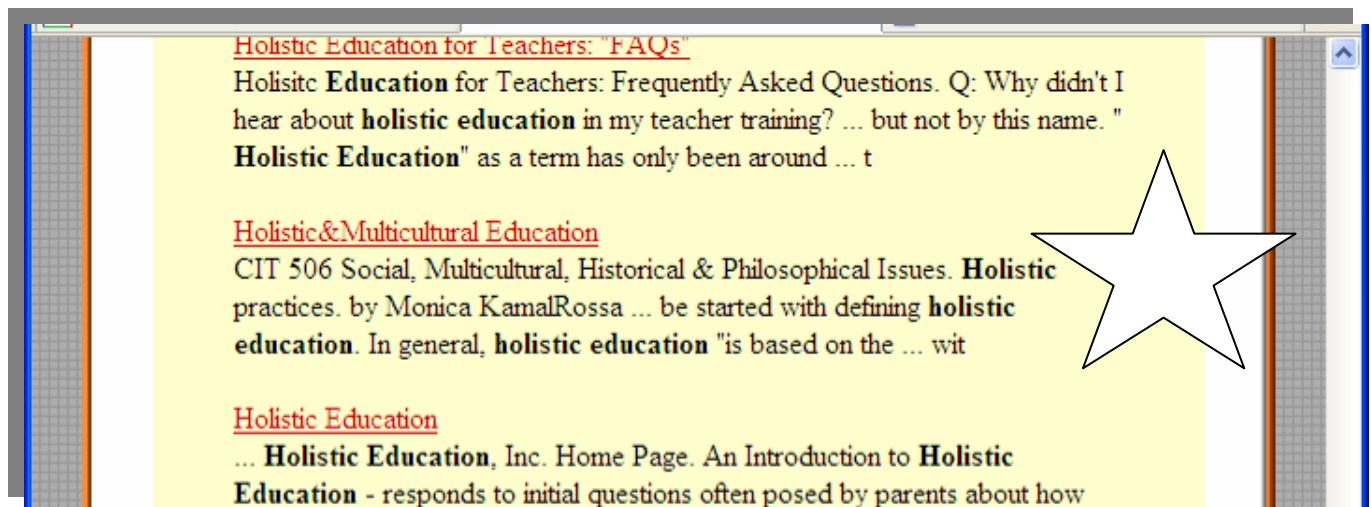
After my spinal cord injury, I completed my Masters in Instructional Technology and Distance Education with an emphasis in teaching and learning. I feel honored that the following are sites with references to a few of my different Masters’ projects.

Holistic Education

The first example references my project on holistic education. This project discusses a few goals of holistic education:

- To promote the understanding of relationships between the student & the community
- To seek a dynamic balance between content and process, learning and assessment, and analytic and creative thinking in the learning environment (The Holistic Education Network of ACSA. 2003.)
- To use learning approaches to meet students’ diverse learning needs.

This is an example of helping educators see that teaching with dignity is including understanding the entire student.



<http://www.holisticworks.net/directory/holistic/education-holistic.html>

Web Quest

Another of my Master’s projects is a multicultural Web Quest developed for students to research and write about multicultural topics while developing a team web site, a multimedia presentation, and a multicultural graphic.

Students will be completing this lesson using multicultural topics like heritage, culture, religion, literature, prejudice, & *disabilities*. Collaboration and cooperative learning will also be incorporated in their learning experience to produce their individual and team projects.

The following reference to the project is titled **“Research Report: Technology and Multicultural Education”**.

KamalRossa, M. (2003. November 30). Multicultural Understanding. Teacher Page.
<http://www.fcae.nova.edu/~kamalros/CAE505/WQ/t-WQ2.html>

This is a useful web quest that is found under the NSU website, as part of the Fischler School of Education and Human Services. This particular page is designed for teachers, and provides new and exciting ideas for them to utilize in their classrooms.

The web quest is designed for grades 6-9; however, the activities can easily be extended to lower and higher levels. [...] I feel that this web quest is an excellent learning process for students. Firstly, it gives students the opportunity to familiarize themselves with a wide range of technological tools. Moreover, it engages them in researching and thinking about very important issues that are often ignored in school. I would definitely bring this web quest into my own classroom. Clearly, it serves as a beneficial tool for both the students and the teacher. The teacher page is clear and simple to follow, and provides lesson plans and appropriate evaluation criteria.

Ultimately, this unit will teach students about other cultures and help them become more tolerant and accepting. This web quest ensures that students gain more practice using technology, while they gain more insight to who they are and how we can get along with others.

<http://www.education.mcgill.ca/EDPT200a-SB-W06/Cooperberg/researchpaper.doc>

This international education web site featured in Spanish is also referencing my Web Quest project.



http://www.aulaintercultural.org/article.php3?id_article=317

Dignity with my Family

My family has been extremely supportive. Whether we swim or camp together at Blue Mound State Park in Wisconsin or bike together with me on my hand cycle on Military Ridge Trail in Wisconsin, the encouragement I receive from my family is wonderful. I am very proud of their individuality and accomplishments. They see me as someone who can do anything as long as we consider the appropriate equipment and devices, accessibility and safety considerations needed to do it successfully.



Olbrich Gardens in Madison



“Rolling with Dignity” is the concept I want to encourage and demonstrate to others. As we face obstacles, we must look beyond it, creatively thinking outside the box and seeing what we need to do to overcome the obstacle. We may have to appeal an insurance decision. We may have to research adaptable equipment, a new surgery or medication, plan a longer appointment with our doctor, or explain to a health facility why they may need a table that lowers or an automatic opener for the door. By advocating for what is needed, we can roll with dignity and increase our independence and quality of life.