



# Northeast Center for Special Care

[www.northeastcenter.com](http://www.northeastcenter.com)

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## Neighbor Spotlight: Michelle D. Dancing to a New Tune

Michelle was a professional choreographer who acquired a brain injury as result of a viral infection. With the intervention of her supportive parents, Michelle was able to come to Northeast Center for Special Care and participate in our unique rehabilitation programs for people with TBI. Initially she was unable to speak and experienced many functional deficits. Michelle was able to improve with the help of the therapies and programs at Northeast Center. We recently sat down to talk with Michelle and her dad Michael. While Michelle has recovered some of her speech, she is only able to communicate a few words at a time, and her dad spoke with us on her behalf:

My name is Michael D. Michelle is my daughter and is here with me; however she has difficulty speaking because of her brain injury, so I will help tell her story.

In 2004 Michelle was in living in California. She is a professional choreographer who had worked in New York City and had just relocated to the West Coast. Michelle was always a good dancer. She danced while she was in college and after graduating she began going on auditions and got hired for a couple of commercials. That led to other jobs and she spent some time working on the road and she also worked in Las Vegas for a while.

Sean Reilly, Unit Counselor at Northeast Center for  
Special Care with Michelle D.



One day we got a call that she was not feeling well, that something was not right. My wife and I immediately flew out to the West Coast. Our daughter was in the hospital. The doctors out there were not sure what the problem was. They thought it might be dehydration or thought perhaps it was psychological. No one knew so we brought Michelle back home to New York State and got her admitted to a hospital close to us.

Michelle underwent tests and the doctors came to the conclusion that she had a viral infection in her brain. It was very difficult for Michelle during the next year. She lost weight and at one point she was seventy-two pounds. She was also having seizures all the time. Eventually Michelle started coming out of it and was stabilized. The seizures, however, took their toll and left her unable to communicate.

Michelle was receiving therapy in the hospital but it was clear that she needed more help. I looked at six or seven programs in the New York City/Long Island area. I didn't feel that the programs I looked at fit the bill as far as cleanliness, or of the types programs or the people there. Then I found out about Northeast Center and I came up and toured and I liked what I saw. My wife also toured and we decided this was the right place for Michelle and she came here right from the hospital.



Michelle with Brittney Tucker, Recreation Aide.

I have to say that the nurses and the aides who cared for Michelle at Northeast Center are phenomenal. They always looked in on her and Michelle likes them a lot - I know she is going to miss them when she goes home. The care was also excellent and I could sense that when I first visited Northeast Center to tour. I was also impressed that there were a lot of things for her to do outside of the regular therapy she received. Michelle loved working in the gym, she was in there everyday.

Speech and occupational therapy helped Michelle a lot. She wasn't able to read when she first came to Northeast Center but now she reads very well. She was also

able to get brain mapping with the neuropsychologist. I believe the brain mapping helped her immensely. Michelle is more alert now and she comprehends well almost all of the time.

Michelle has made remarkable improvement while at Northeast Center. She is ready to return home. She is going to receive community services under the TBI Waiver.

The special attention from the staff and therapists at Northeast Center is second to none. They are very enthusiastic and you can see it in how they treat the residents.

Michelle D. with her dad Michael.



Our intensive brain injury program and accomplished staff assisted Michelle to make the gains she needed enabling her to reenter the community. She is now successfully living at home with her family. The mission at Northeast Center for Special Care drives our philosophy and treatment programs. Our successful outcomes of assisting people to return to the community are recognized worldwide.