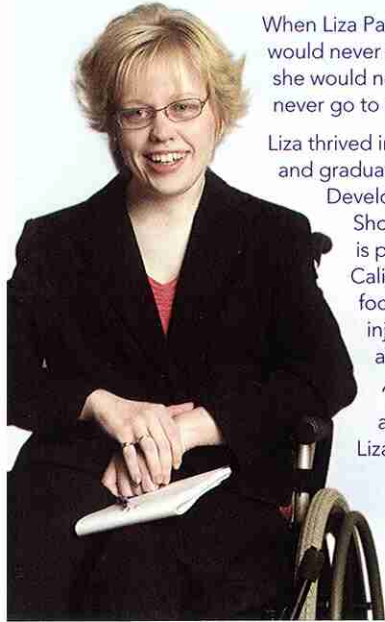


## Transition Success Story: Liza Patchel

*A lifetime of care at Kennedy Krieger, along with her mother's no-pity approach to parenting, helped Liza on her path to earning a master's degree and living independently.*



When Liza Patchel was diagnosed with cerebral palsy as an infant, doctors said she would never speak or walk. When she enrolled in public school, administrators said she would never play for their sports teams. Other "experts" told her she would never go to college. Now 31, Liza has spent most of her life proving them wrong.

Liza thrived in college, earning a nomination to the Phi Beta Kappa honor society and graduating with a 3.75 GPA. After completing an internship with the Developmental Disabilities Administration, she now works at the Eastern Shore Center for Independent Living, helping others with disabilities, and is pursuing a master's degree in social work at the University of Southern California. Her goal is to become a hospital social worker with a special focus on helping children with traumatic brain injuries and spinal cord injuries. She plans on moving to Baltimore and living independently after graduation.

"She's a great role model for younger patients with her self-motivation and accomplishments," says Dr. Charles Silberstein, who has treated Liza at Kennedy Krieger since she was 5 years old.

**Keys to Success:** Liza credits the 16 years she spent in Kennedy Krieger Institute's schools prior to attending public school with providing the foundation that helped her thrive. Liza also worked with a team of Kennedy Krieger doctors, clinicians, and therapists who taught her how to move in and out of her wheelchair, dress herself, walk with an assistive device, and even play fetch with her dog.

Liza is quick to recognize her mother, Sue Patchel, as the unsung hero in her story. "Even at times when I was feeling down about myself, she gave me tough love," says Liza. This "no-pity" approach to parenting spurred Liza's love of helping the less fortunate, and helped her become the self-confident adult she is today.

*"At Kennedy Krieger, they told me that I was just like everyone else and taught me to have high self-esteem."*

—Liza Patchel