



Brynn O'Neill

Transforming the Patient Experience

By Jenna Caputo | Photos By Angela Mia Photography & Contributed By the O'Neill Family

Brynn O'Neill always knew she wanted to be in healthcare in some capacity. She wanted to help people feel their best and make a difference in their lives.

Originally from Plattsburgh, NY, Brynn was an athlete all through her school years. She played all sports but concentrated on soccer, basketball, and tennis. Both of her parents were from large families, so Brynn and her sister grew up surrounded by their adored aunts and uncles and their many, many cousins who are some of their very best friends. Living across from her grandparents' dairy farm, Brynn has many fond memories of riding her bike through cornfields and playing in the hay mound.

Brynn went to Ithaca College to receive her Doctorate of Physical Therapy (DPT) before her first job brought her to NYC. She fell in love with the energy of the city and lived nearby in Hoboken, NJ for ten years before moving here. As a Physical Therapist (PT), Brynn specializes in working with runners and triathletes, helping thousands of endurance athletes throughout their training cycles to get to the starting line healthy and finish their races strong. Her advice to

endurance athletes is to invest in a foam roller. "It can be your greatest tool for recovery!" she emphasizes. But her advice for everyone in general is to not let your pain linger. "It's always easier for me as a PT to fix things when we catch them early. Reach out to your local healthcare providers and get the help you need sooner than later!"

After working five years in NYC, she met Corey, who also worked in the city and lived in Hoboken. "We both appreciated that Hoboken gave you quick access to the city but a little more space from the 'crazy,'" she says. But as much as they both loved the area, they knew they didn't want to settle and raise kids there. "Raising children in the city can be fun, but it's also very difficult. We lived in a fourth-floor walkup and had our first daughter in Hoboken until she was a year old. Carrying her plus diaper bags and laundry and grocery bags and the car seat, etc., up four flights of stairs every day gets old and tiring. We knew we were ready to get out and change our way of living," she says. They decided the Capital Region would be the perfect spot—halfway between their families still in Plattsburgh and Rochester and NYC, where Brynn would



continue working part time to keep her current clients. They initially rented in Latham so they could get a feel for the area before buying something more permanent. Clifton Park had the convenience they were looking for, and they loved the different neighborhood options. It ended up being the perfect choice. “I love Clifton Park because of its community feel, its proximity to downtown Albany and Saratoga, how it’s still just a short train ride down to NYC, and that I feel like we are laying a good, solid foundation for our family to grow in,” says Brynn. “It truly feels like home. I also have some of my best childhood and college friends in the surrounding areas so it’s nice to grow with them and their families.”

Brynn has always remained close with her family no matter where she lived, often going back to visit her parents and grandparents. During one visit home with her sister, Brynn saw how difficult it was to give her ailing grandmother a simple shot in the arm. “I thought that there had to be an easier way to open up clothing so that individuals can get the medical interventions they need,” she says. “I remember it vividly—it was an instant ‘light bulb’ moment!” That following summer, Brynn spent time on a blood cancer floor in a NYC hospital to do some market research. “I met some of the most incredible people. I learned their stories, I met their families, and I saw that when someone gets a diagnosis, no matter how big or small, their life completely changes. It was in my time with them that I realized that doing one *small thing* to make someone feel a little bit more like themselves can do wonders for a person. We all hate the hospital gown, so creating garments that can somehow eliminate that need feels like a step in the right direction.”

Brynn wanted to change the stigma of receiving treatment and create something that would allow people to feel comfortable and secure. “Treatment rooms are kept cold, so I wanted to find a way to allow access to the sites without patients having to sit there half exposed. Hospital gowns are absolutely terrible—I think they make you feel sick even if you are not, so this eliminates the need for the gown in some cases. And I wanted something that helped people feel ‘cool and stylish’—something they could wear in and out of treatment.”

Brynn continued to research, speaking to professionals in

multiple fields, including design and production along with former and current patients, to create her design. The first shirt strategically opened in the chest and sleeves to allow for port, PICC line, IV, and dialysis fistula accessibility on both sides. Along with the discreet access points, each shirt has a fashion-forward design, allowing patients to wear them both for treatment and out for errands or meeting with a friend afterwards. Using high-quality fabric, the shirts are customized with soft *mélange* fleece brushed for comfort and warmth.





They also now have a lightweight version of the shirt releasing this month. The prototypes were tested at Weill Cornell and NYU so that healthcare providers, patients, and caregivers could all approve of the style and design.

Brynn named the company PATCH 10, playing off the verb ‘to patch,’ meaning to strengthen and reinforce something. “It’s a supportive word,” she says. “That’s what I want these shirts to do for people. I want them to help make people feel better, to give them something that could help make their day a little easier. The other cool thing was that once I started thinking about ‘patch,’ I remembered that my memé used to sew patches into my sweatpants because I was always getting holes in them from running around the farm. So, it just seemed to click, and I went with it. As for ten—ten as a number is just a strong number—I want patients to feel their best 10/10 self when in these garments.”

When COVID hit in March 2020, the prototypes were still in testing. Brynn and Corey had planned to move to Latham at the end of March anyway, but because the city had shut down so quickly, they packed everything up in two days and fled to her parents’ house in the meantime. The garments were ready for their soft launch in July 2020. “It was in the thick of COVID up at my parents’ house that we launched, and I could NOT have done it without them or my amazingly supportive husband!” says Brynn.

The response so far has been great, and Brynn is looking forward to expanding the options and pushing PATCH 10 to new bounds. “I’d love for PATCH 10 to be the medical clothing company—one that truly transforms the ‘patient experience’ and caters to all types of treatments and diagnoses. It’s important to me that we create a strong community of patients and survivors all while embodying a strong mission of empowerment and self-worth.” In keeping with her mission of helping others, PATCH 10 also gives back a percentage of their profits. Brynn feels that PATCH 10 has given her an opportunity to help people on a grander scale and to make a difference for a population she doesn’t normally get to work with as a PT at the most difficult time in their life.

Running a business on her own has been quite the learning experience for Brynn. She had the medical background but



starting a clothing business and all the design, production, manufacturing, legal, and accounting that comes with it were way out of her wheelhouse. “Thankfully, I have a great advisor who offers a lot of advice and insight, and I ask for help from so many people whenever I need it. Because I’m out of my comfort zone, I’ve learned how important it is to just ask for help! I’ve been amazed at how many people are willing to give up a few minutes of their time to help me along on this journey. In addition, PATCH 10’s two designers who are responsible for coming up with the actual design of the shirt and are the liaisons between us and the factories are just incredible partners. Without their talents, the garments just would not exist.”

Life has now become a balancing act. In addition to running and growing PATCH, Brynn still practices PT part time, commuting down to her clients in NYC a few days a week, then working on PATCH the rest of the days. She treats any and all injuries and age ranges. “Some of my very favorite patients right now are in middle and high school, and then I have patients that are training for their next big race or are post-op shoulder surgery, etc. The best things about being a PT is that I get to meet and work with so many wonderful people,” she says.

Outside of work, her favorite thing to do is play with her daughters. “Being a mom is by far my greatest role. The lessons that I’ve learned from my kids are ones that you can’t find in a business book. They are a constant reminder of what really matters and what’s truly important in life.”

With everything going on, their family hasn’t had much time for travel, but Brynn and Corey had honeymooned in Hawaii, and it was a trip of a lifetime. Here at home, Brynn has been spending “WAY TOO MUCH TIME” at Home Goods as they continue to settle their new house. After so many years in the city, it’s been exciting to have a car and be able to go to the grocery store and fill up the trunk or buy in bulk. “It’s the little things that we just couldn’t do down in the city,” she jokes. Brynn is also a runner herself. Before things got really busy the last couple of years, she loved running in races and completed two marathons and countless half marathons all over the country. Keeping it to shorter distances these days, Brynn now runs for fun on her own time.



She is ecstatic that she can help people on a broader level and is looking forward to expanding her presence and getting the garments to the people who really need them. “As a society, it’s easy for us to say that a lot of people get sick. We know that the numbers are astronomical. But unless it’s immediately affecting you, I don’t think that people fully grasp the effect that getting a diagnosis, no matter how big or small, can affect not only that person but their support system as well. I think it’s time that we, as a society, do more to help these people. All I want for PATCH 10 is to help make someone’s day a little easier and a little brighter. I want these garments to uplift someone’s spirits and help them feel better.”

She’s learned a lot along the way and her advice for anyone thinking of starting a business is simple—Do it. Don’t leave room for what ifs. Take small steps, keep moving forward, ask for help, and trust your gut. “Just keep putting one foot in front of the other. That’s really helped me move along. There have been so many times that I just don’t know what I am doing or I’ve been out of my comfort zone, but I keep putting one foot in front of the other. The greatest thing I’ve learned from this whole process is that doors will open if you keep moving forward. Doing small things can open up really great opportunities!”

For more information on PATCH 10 and their clothing options, visit www.Patch10.com or check them out on Instagram at [@getpatch10](https://www.instagram.com/getpatch10).