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Adapt. Adjust. *Thrive.*

Spinal Times, Issue 8 (March 2024)

CLIENT SUCCESS STORY



A few months ago, I had the pleasure of calling Ken to thank him for his donation. I wanted him to know just how much we appreciate his support and assured him that his gift would be put to good use. I also wanted to find out what made him choose to donate to SCI-AB. As it turns out, Ken had used our services before, so I followed up to see if Ken felt comfortable sharing his story with me, and I am so glad he did.

Ken, a seasoned construction supervisor with 25 years of experience overseeing road-building crews, found his life taking an unexpected turn around Thanksgiving in 2012. What started as a seemingly trivial stiff neck developed into a spinal cord injury, altering the course of his life dramatically.

Upon waking up with a debilitating stiff neck, Ken initially dismissed it as a minor issue. However, as the discomfort persisted, he sought medical attention. An examination and subsequent bloodwork revealed a serious infection, leading to immediate hospitalization. An MRI disclosed an abscess at C6, prompting surgery to remove it. This marked the beginning of Ken's challenging journey — a prolonged stay in the Intensive Care Unit, four months at the Royal Alexandra Hospital, rehabilitation at the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital, and eventually transitioning to a long-term care facility.

Despite the hardships, Ken's tenacity shines through. His resilience becomes evident as he recounts navigating the complexities of life in a wheelchair. One poignant moment involves his revelation of being hit by a car while crossing the road. This incident, combined with various daily challenges, underscores the unfortunate reality that people often overlook those in wheelchairs, treating them as if they are invisible.

Ken shares instances of his struggles during routine activities, like shopping. Maneuvering a power chair with a cart in tow, he faces a lack of consideration from others, engrossed in their own distractions. From aisle congestion to reaching for items on high shelves, Ken's experiences highlight the importance of empathy and awareness in our every day interactions.

The narrative encourages self-reflection—urging us to ponder our actions and consider the impact they have on others. The plea is for a more inclusive city, where every citizen, including those in wheelchairs, can navigate public spaces without undue challenges. Ken's ongoing journey towards recovery, punctuated

by annual visits to the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital, a dedicated fitness regime, and a hopeful return to gardening, serves as an inspiring testament to the human spirit's resilience.

In essence, Ken Thiessen's story is a call to embrace kindness, foster awareness, and strive for a community where everyone, regardless of their abilities, can thrive. It prompts us to be not only better citizens but also compassionate individuals who recognize the strength in diversity.

When asked about Ken's experience with SCI-AB, he is as effusive in his praise of the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital as he is about SCI-AB's peer program.

'It was very important having visits from them early in my recovery. Now I think back about what it might be like for people with their journey as they are just starting out. I once was there.' ~ Ken

INTRODUCING PETA GLEZERSON - SENIOR MANAGER OF PHILANTHROPY



I recently joined the SCI-AB team as the Senior Manager of Philanthropy. Over the past two decades, my professional journey has been dedicated to the not-for-profit sector, primarily focusing on domestic violence and social services. My extensive background in fund development has equipped me with valuable expertise, and I am enthusiastic about contributing my knowledge

to SCI-AB.

My goals are like a three-part harmony: first, I'm on a mission to build solid relationships by shaking hands, virtual or otherwise, and getting to know as many stakeholders as is possible. Next up, I'm plotting the growth of our fund development program, ensuring the organization's sustainability is solid. And to cap it off, I'm all about spreading the word – shouting it from the rooftops, really – about the incredible we're doing.

Now, let's talk about a passion of mine: storytelling. Stories are like the secret sauce of the human experience, hitting us right in the feels. They're the MVPs of communication, guiding us through life, making sense of the chaos, and creating a sense of continuity. When told right, they leave a mark that lasts longer than a catchy tune. And guess what? Impact is the name of the game. So, as I cruise through the year, I'll be on the lookout for stories that pack a punch, stories that shout from the rooftops about the importance of SCI-AB's work and the myriad ways you're changing lives for people with spinal cord injuries or other physical disabilities.

Talking of making connections, my virtual door is always open! Call, email, carrier pigeon – whatever floats your boat. Let's chat about making a difference, share a story, or dive into a debate on the important questions, like whether cereal qualifies as soup. The floor is yours!

Call me on 587-742-3642 or email me at peta.glezerson@gmail.com

DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?

We all have a story to share. If you are or were a client, volunteer, donor, or staff member, we would love to hear from you. Send in your story or a testimonial so you too, can inspire others and change lives.

For more information, please email Peta at peta.glezerson@sci-ab.ca.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT RED PLAID DEVELOPMENTS



Hobby Loft Exterior

Adam Arsenault at **Red Plaid Developments** is driven to enhance lives by addressing the urgent need for accessible housing. Breaking barriers to backyard development in Alberta, homeowners now have an opportunity to construct secondary properties for those with mobility challenges.

Red Plaid Developments' mission is crystal clear: elevate the quality of life for individuals facing mobility constraints. The Hobby Loft and Hobby Loft Garden suite, both barrier-free, offer versatile solutions for various properties.

Enter the "A City Within A City: The No Limits Collective - Accessible Housing Initiative." This program incentivizes homeowners to build accessible homes in their own backyards, providing both an investment opportunity and a streamlined, non-invasive build process managed by Red Plaid Developments. The initiative also collaborates with non-profit organizations to match individuals with mobility challenges to available homes, all at no extra cost to property owners.

Streamlining accessibility, all barrier-free properties are listed on the No Limits Collective Website, ensuring swift identification of suitable tenants immediately after an injury. Property owners benefit from zero tenant search efforts, no maintenance

responsibilities for the first five years, a 100% increase in property value, and a one-year rental lease agreement integrated into the build contract. This innovative approach empowers homeowners to create a low-risk investment property while positively impacting their community.

For more information about Adam's project, and to share your feedback, check out the YouTube video below.

CLICK TO WATCH RED PLAID'S VIDEO

WAYS YOU CAN HELP

**Unleash the Power of Compassion:
Join Our Monthly Donor Community Today!**



In the spirit of creating meaningful change, we invite you to join SCI-AB's **Spinal Superstars Monthly Giving Program**. By doing so, you will be the driving force behind empowering persons with a spinal cord injury or other physical disability to achieve independence and full participation in the community. Every small step can lead to a monumental impact, and your consistent support will play a crucial role in the positive transformations we aim to achieve.

Imagine the incredible power that emerges when many individuals come together, each contributing a modest amount monthly. It's a collective force that builds bridges, creates opportunities, and

fosters lasting change. Your monthly gift will not only provide a steady foundation for our initiatives but will also magnify the reach of our efforts.

By becoming a monthly donor, you're not just making a financial contribution; you're becoming part of a movement that believes in the power of unity and you will be part of a community of like-minded people who share your belief that a little goes a long way. Your generosity, combined with the support of others, creates a ripple effect of compassion that touches countless lives. Together, we can turn small steps into giant strides, making a profound impact on those who need it most.

Are you ready to be a force for good? Take that first step today by becoming a monthly donor. Join us in turning compassion into action and witness the life-changing results that come from the collective power of many.

The numbers speak for themselves. If 25 people gave \$25 a month, that means \$7,500 a year, and it can only grow from there. Your commitment matters, and together, we can all make a difference.

Click the button below to become a monthly donor. Or, if you would like to chat more about your options, please call Peta at 587-742-3642.

BECOME A MONTHLY DONOR

CROWDFUNDER CAMPAIGN



SCI-AB has partnered with the Government of Alberta to create a Crowdfunding campaign. This campaign was created using Crowdfunding Alberta's platform. The incentive to use this platform was that the government had funds set aside to provide a match to successful campaigns. This campaign is the second one SCI-AB is doing and as such, will receive \$2,500 when the campaign ends in March.

If you want to be a part of the change you want to see in the world, please consider supporting SCI-AB's Crowdfunder campaign. Your gift can help us fund essential programs and services for individuals with spinal cord injuries or other physical disabilities, making a tangible difference in their lives.

When you click the link below, you will be taken to the Crowdfunder platform where you can grant a wish or donate an amount of your choosing. Either way, please know that your gift will receive a match from the government, which serves to amplify your impact and significantly affect change.

You have until the end of March to make this difference and all donations are eligible for a tax receipt for the 2024 year.

Thank you for making a difference in our community!

DONATE TO OUR CROWDFUNDER

SERVUS CALGARY MARATHON



The Servus Calgary Marathon has been at the forefront of running in this country for 60 years. Voted the Best Road Race in Alberta for many years, the Calgary Marathon is a challenging, competitive and fun race designed for everyone at every level.

This marathon attracts runners from all over the world and honestly, who can blame them. And if that isn't enough, the Servus Calgary Marathon Charity Challenge unites the spirit of runners with a unique fundraising program with the main purpose of creating Healthy Communities that Thrive Together.

This year, like many years before, SCI-AB is participating in the Servus Calgary Marathon Charity Challenge, and we are asking everyone to consider joining our Spinal Cord Injury Alberta team. By doing so, you will help us raise money for programs supporting the people in our community.

Talking about raising money for SCI-AB, Shamel Elsayed's story on the Servus Calgary Marathon website is inspiring, and we are so thankful to him for all the support he gives SCI-AB. He has participated in the Charity Challenge for the last 6 years and has raised over 120,000 for our agency. Watch his video below.

Please sign up to walk, run or roll either virtually May 26 – June 23 or in person May 26.

By using the link below to register, SCI-AB will earn \$5 that will also go towards programming for our clients.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER FOR THE RUN](#)

[WATCH SHAMEL ELSAYED'S VIDEO](#)

YOUR INPUT SHAPES OUR NEWSLETTER



As we continue to enhance our newsletter, we greatly value your input. Your thoughts and preferences are crucial to our ongoing efforts to improve and effectively communicate with you.

I would love to hear back from you with your thoughts and I have three questions for you to consider.

1. How would you rate your overall satisfaction with our newsletter content? Satisfied, neutral or dissatisfied.
2. Are there specific areas you believe need improvement or adjustment? Please provide details:
3. Do you have any suggestions or preferences for content you would like to see (or less) of in future newsletters? Please provide details:

Your insights play a pivotal role in shaping the future of our communications.

To respond, please reply to this newsletter or feel free to call Peta at (587) 742-3642 or email at peta.glezerson@sci-ab.ca.

Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts.

DONATE

Spinal Cord Injury Alberta
1-888-654-5444
www.sci-ab.ca



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