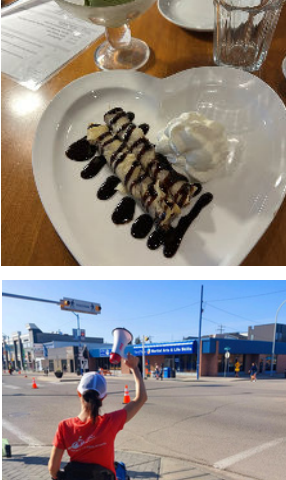


Intro + Last Month's Recap



Last month marked the Servus Marathon in Calgary, and peer mentor Shamel and his team from Cenovus raised over \$27000 towards SCI-AB programs ! And our very own Kim Hughes raised over \$6000 and did the full 42.2km marathon!



The SCI-AB YYC Staff also went out to support the AccessAbilTea Celebration! Here in Edmonton, we enjoyed some delicious peer dinners together and had an awesome time bowling!



Upcoming days to add to the calendar for June: June 3rd marks World Bicycle Day, a day to celebrate adaptive cycling! and June 19th marks adaptive recreation day, so it might be a fun opportunity to try something new!

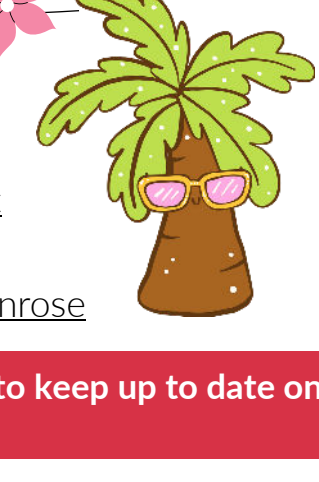


New Quarterly Survey Roll Out for Program Review

We are also conducting a peer program evaluation tool that has been developed over the last year in our SCI-Canada peer working group. This will help us see the value of our programs and see where improvements can be made. By receiving (and reading) this newsletter you are a valued member of the SCI-AB peer program, and would love your input! You can be entered into a draw to win a gift card for completing at least 3 of the 4 surveys throughout the year. The **first round of surveys will be open until June 30th. The links to complete the surveys are below:**

[Peer Program Survey](#)

[Client Services Coordination Survey](#)



SCI-AB June 2025 Events:


Upcoming SCI-AB Events in June:

- June 4: [Virtual Peer Chat](#)
- June 10: [Virtual Ladies Chat](#)
- June 10: [YEG Peer Bowling](#)
- June 11: [YYC Coffee Group](#)
- June 17: [Coffee + Peers at the Glenrose](#)
- June 18: [Virtual Peer Chat](#)
- June 18: [YEG Peer Dinner](#)
- June 24: [Virtual Ladies Peer Chat](#)
- June 25: [YYC Peer Dinner](#)
- June 26: [Pizza + Peers at the Glenrose](#)



Be sure to check out our [online events calendar](#) or our social media channels to keep up to date on upcoming events!

Save the Date for the Upcoming SCI-AB Events this Summer!



SAVE THE DATE

2025
PEER CONFERENCE

Living Beyond Limits

Thursday
September 18th
CALGARY



In the Community + Across the Province:

The Paralympic Sports Association (PSA) adaptive golf program is now in full swing and looking for participants. It will take place at the Victoria driving range in May and June. For more information on PSA program offerings or to sign up, check out: <https://www.parasportsab.com/we-offer/>

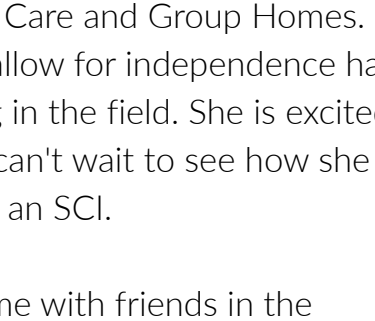
Other spring/summer programs will start soon! Be sure to sign up for adaptive kayaking or handcycling if interested! Check out all the programs here: <https://www.parasportsab.com/we-offer/categories/spring-summer-programs-11/>

There will be more opportunities for other activities as the weather warms up, so stay tuned! Wheelchair Sports Alberta (WSA) has an adaptive sports try it opportunity every Thursday at the main gym at the Glenrose from 2-3pm, there is a rotating try it schedule. There is also now the option to try adaptive sports at the Terwilliger Recreation Complex on Thursdays from 4:15-5:15pm every week!

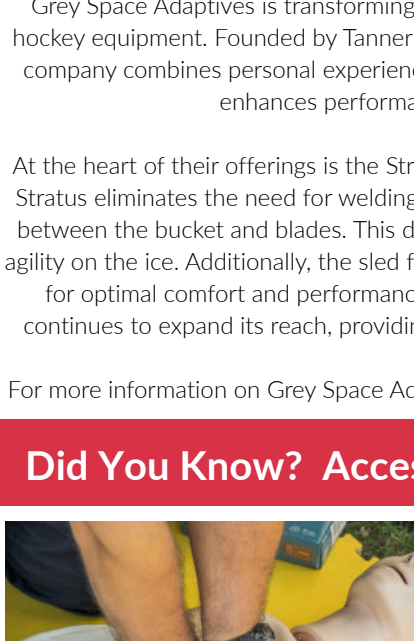
For those looking for extra ice time in the sledge hockey off season, EASA will be hosting free ice times over the spring/summer. Please contact Sharon (780-721-7071) if planning to attend, and if you need any equipment. No experience is necessary, and family/friends are welcome to come and play/try as well! See the poster for all spring/summer ice times. For June, the ice times will be on June 10th from 9pm-10:15pm and on June 24th from 8:15pm-9:30pm at Millennium Place Chev Area in Sherwood Park.

[Rocky Mountain Adaptive](#) has lots of awesome things coming up this summer. From camps, to lessons, or equipment rentals, they will have something you will love! They have adaptive mountain bikes, accessible paddleboards, kayaks and more! Between biking, hiking and paddling, it is a great way to enjoy the mountains during the summer months!

Ultimate Para Sports will be starting up an [adaptive scuba program](#) out of Cochrane at the SLS Center. The try scuba nights will be free on Tuesday evenings, and then it is \$550 if you want to complete your open water certification!



New Staff Feature: Danni Lamb | Client Services Coordinator



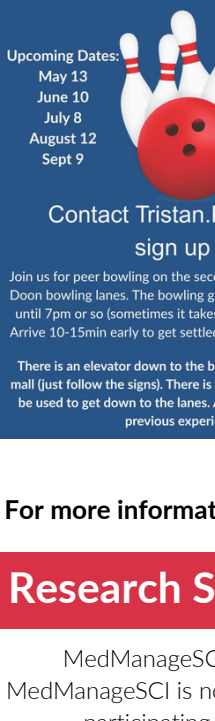
Danni has a background working in Long-Term Care and Group Homes. Empowering people and providing resources to allow for independence has been a passion of hers since she started working in the field. She is excited to be a part of the work SCI-Alberta does and can't wait to see how she can support people living with an SCI.

In her spare time Danni enjoys spending time with friends in the mountains, going to concerts, and attending the various festivals and vibrant summer culture Edmonton has to offer."

Welcome to the team Danni!

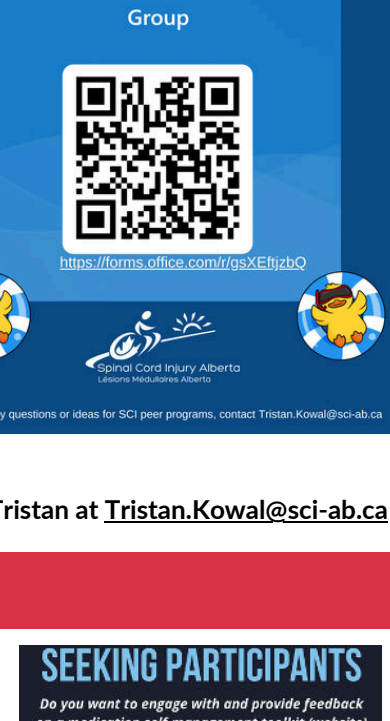
SWITCH THE SIGN Initiative | Wheelchair User Parking Spaces - Project Update

Congdon's Aids to Daily Living have been one of the first businesses to include a wheelchair users parking space!



"This isn't about parking - it's about dignity, independence, and equal access for people who use wheelchairs" - Sandy Saunders

Thank you for spearheading this initiative Sandy! We hope to see more of these signs around soon! Check out the [media coverage here](#) or check out the [article online here!](#)



Technology Spotlight : Grey Space Adaptive Sledges

Grey Space Adaptives is transforming the world of adaptive sports with its innovative approach to sledge hockey equipment. Founded by Tanner Fandrey, a former Canadian National Sledge Hockey Team player, the company combines personal experience with mechanical design expertise to create cutting-edge gear that enhances performance and accessibility for athletes with disabilities.

At the heart of their offerings is the Stratus sledge hockey sled. Crafted from a single piece of aluminum, the Stratus eliminates the need for welding, reducing the risk of fatigue cracking and ensuring precise alignment between the bucket and blades. This design choice results in a lightweight, durable sled that offers superior agility on the ice. Additionally, the sled features an adjustable frame length, allowing users to customize the fit for optimal comfort and performance. The company has secured partnerships with national teams and continues to expand its reach, providing athletes with the equipment they need to excel in sledge hockey.

For more information on Grey Space Adaptives check out their website: <https://www.greyspaceadaptives.ca/>

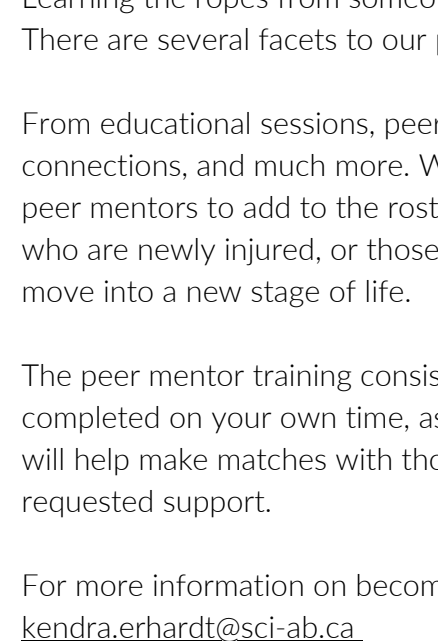


Did You Know? Accessible First Aid Course



Ever wonder how or where to complete your first aid certification as a wheelchair user? Look no further than [Coast2coast first aid](#). The course was located at the C3 Church (9425 76 Avenue NW, Edmonton, AB T6C 0J8). There was an accessible ramp entrance through the back, and accessible washrooms on site. The instructor was excellent and provided wheelchair specific examples and scenarios. It was a great experience and I would highly recommend it to anyone looking to get their certification.

New Upcoming Peer Program Offerings



- Our new peer coordinator Tristan will be taking the lead on several new exciting peer initiatives. These programs are still in the works, but here is a sneak preview of what to expect:
- **Peer Led Bowling Program** at Bonnie Doon **Uniques on Tuesday Evening for \$7/person** (Laplines date this month: **June 10th**) (you can cancel for your bowling here: <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/spinal-cord-injury-alberta/events/sciab-peer-bowling-june/>)
 - **Swimming program** for those with SCIs or related physical disabilities. This is a great opportunity to gain confidence and skills in the water in a safe and controlled setting. Complete the form via QR code or link on swim poster to get the program rolling. **Or fill the form here**

For more information about either of these programs or to inquire about volunteering, reach out to Tristan at Tristan.Kowal@sci-ab.ca



Research Study Spotlight: Medication Self Management

MedManageSCI is an online toolkit designed for adults with SCI, caregivers, and healthcare providers. MedManageSCI is now live and we are looking for feedback! Before accessing the toolkit, if you are interested in participating in this study, please complete the consent form and surveys by clicking on this link: <https://redcap.utoronto.ca/surveys/?s=JKFXDL4ER44YEDJFE>

Please note: as soon as you complete the surveys, you will be redirected to the toolkit (website).

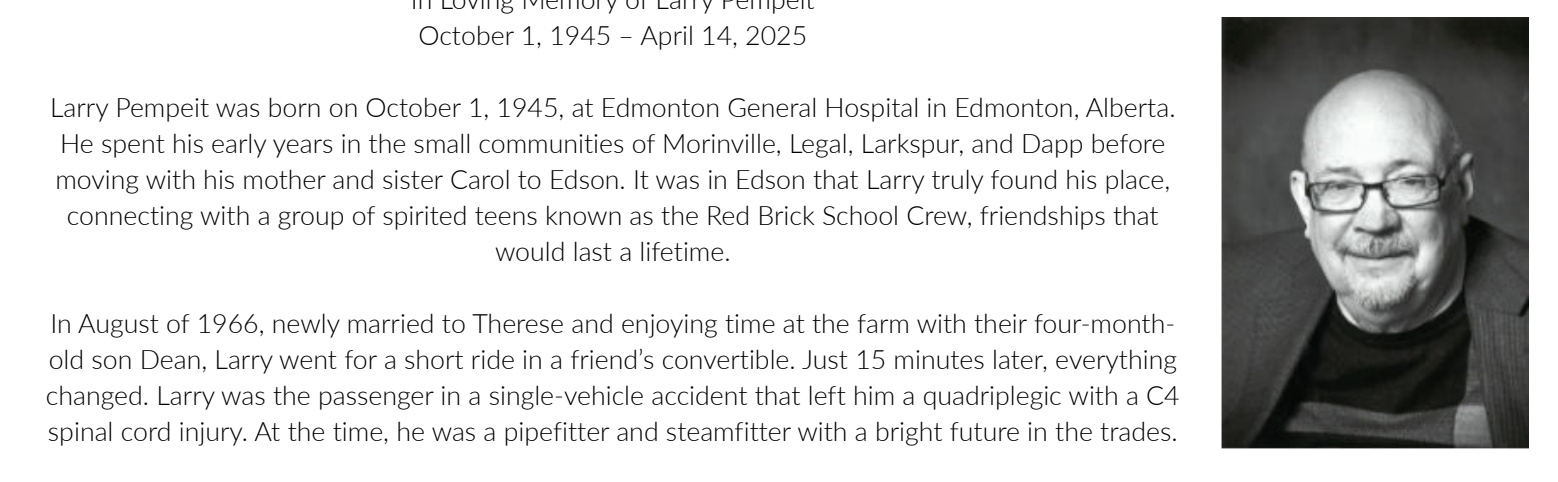
For this study, we will ask you to complete baseline surveys on some background information, medication use, thoughts about medications, self-efficacy, and quality of life. You will then be re-directed to the MedManageSCI website where you can explore the full toolkit. After one week, we will send you another survey to get some additional feedback on the toolkit. At this time, you will have the opportunity to participate in an interview if you would like to provide more in-depth feedback. Finally, after 3 months of having access to the toolkit, we will send a final survey to look at your medication use, thoughts about medications, self-efficacy, and quality of life.

For each survey you complete, you will receive a \$25 gift card. If you complete all three surveys, you will be entered into a draw for a \$200 Amazon gift card. We thank you for your support with this project! Please reach out to Lauren at medsci.study@utoronto.ca if you have any questions.

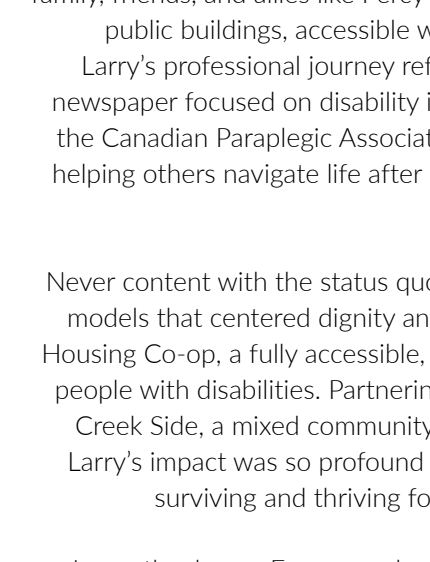


CAPCC Picnic Party at Rundle Park

Lots of smiles and fun times at the CAPCC Summer kick off party at Rundle Park in Edmonton!



WestJet Gift of Flight Raffle and September Peer Conference



Spinal Cord Injury Alberta invites you to join us as for the 2025 Peer Conference on Thursday, September 18th at TELUS Spark in Calgary. This year's theme, Living Beyond Limits, celebrates resilience, independence, and connection in the spinal cord injury and disability community. The Peer Conference brings together individuals with spinal cord injuries, families, caregivers, healthcare professionals, and community partners from across Alberta.

Learn more, or buy tickets here: <https://sci-ab.ca/peer-conference-2025-2/>

We are grateful to have received a Gift of Flight Raffle from West Jet to help support the Peer Conference. You could win one roundtrip flight for two to any regularly scheduled and marketed WestJet destination. See the poster for details!

SCI-AB Peer Program New Mentor + Mentee Shoutout

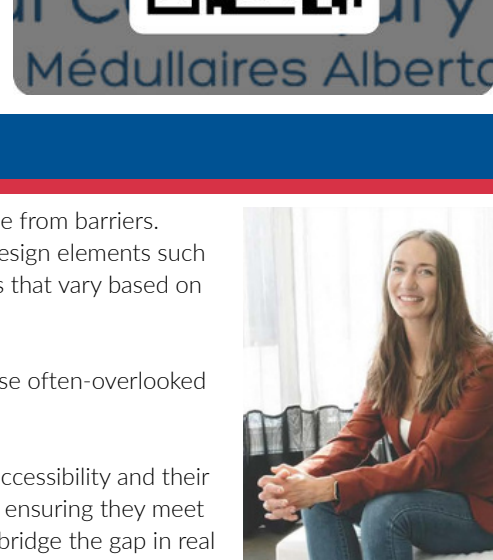
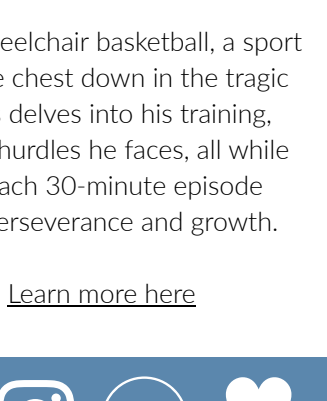
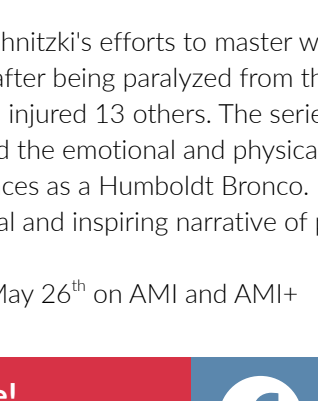
The peer program is the basis of how SCI-AB came to be. Peers supporting peers and the invaluable lived experience perspective. Learning the ropes from someone who has been there and gets it. There are several facets to our peer program.

From educational sessions, peer social meetings, one on one peer connections, and much more. We are always looking for more peer mentors to add to the roster to help to connect with those who are newly injured, or those who have new questions as they move into a new stage of life.

The peer mentor training consists of an online course that can be completed on your own time, as well as a peer mentor profile that will help make matches with those in the community who have requested support.

For more information on becoming a peer mentor, contact kendra.ernhardt@sci-ab.ca

To sign up to be a mentor or mentee, complete this form: <https://forms.office.com/r/Vm4AMuLMHC>



Accessible Housing Realtor - Volker Realty

At Volker Realty, they believe everyone deserves a living space that supports their life, free from barriers. Accessibility goes beyond wheelchair ramps and wide doorways. It encompasses thoughtful design elements such as counter heights, cabinet reach, shower access, and light switch placements—considerations that vary based on individual needs.

Recognizing that mobility challenges are unique, Volker Realty is committed to addressing these often-overlooked needs.

Sherelle Murray, a trained REALTOR® at Volker Realty, specializes in assessing properties for accessibility and their potential for retrofitting. She connects clients with local experts to modify spaces accordingly, ensuring they meet specific needs. Sherelle's guidance and support in this area are offered at no charge, aiming to bridge the gap in real estate services for those with disabilities.

In partnership with Red Plaid Developments, Volker Realty offers homes designed with barrier-free features for individuals with mobility challenges. This collaboration ensures that clients have access to living spaces that are both comfortable and accommodating.

For more information or to explore accessible housing options, check out: <https://volkerrealty.ca/accessibility/>

Volker Realty is dedicated to making homeownership accessible to all, ensuring that every individual has the opportunity to live independently and comfortably. Thank you for helping to address the need for accessible housing!

Advocacy| Alberta Budget 2025: What does it mean for Albertan's with disabilities?

The Alberta Budget 2025, presented in February, has elicited strong reactions from disability advocacy groups across the province. While some welcome certain initiatives, many express concern over funding cuts and the potential implications for individuals with disabilities. The Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) program is set to receive a \$49 million reduction in 2025, with projections indicating a total decrease of \$77 million by 2027-28. While the government assures that AISH recipients' monthly benefits will remain unaffected, advocates worry about the long-term sustainability of the program and potential delays in service delivery. The introduction of the Alberta Disability Assistance Program (ADAP) in 2026 aims to provide employment support for individuals with disabilities. However, there are concerns about the transition process and the potential for individuals to be reassessed and possibly redirected from AISH to ADAP, which may affect their benefits and support services. Individuals and families affected by these changes are urged to engage with their [Members of the Legislative Assembly \(MLAs\)](#) to express concerns. Ongoing advocacy and dialogue between the government, service providers, and the disability community are essential to ensure that the needs of Albertans with disabilities are adequately addressed. Especially until there is provincial accessibility legislation in place.

Larry Ronald Pempelt in Memoriam

In Loving Memory of Larry Pempelt
October 1, 1945 - April 14, 2025

Larry Pempelt was born on October 1, 1945, at Edmonton General Hospital in Edmonton, Alberta. He spent his early years in the small communities of Morinville, Legal, Larkspur, and Dapp before moving with his mother and sister Carol to Edson. It was in Edson that Larry truly found his place, connecting with a group of spirited teens known as the Red Brick School Crew, friendships that would last a lifetime.

In August of 1966, newly married to Therese and enjoying time at the farm with their four-month-old son Dean, Larry went for a short ride in a friend's convertible. Just 15 minutes later, everything changed. Larry was the passenger in a single-vehicle accident that left him a quadriplegic with a C4 spinal cord injury. At the time, he was a pipetteur and steamfitter with a bright future in the trades.

Despite the life-altering injury, Larry refused to be a victim. Faced with a world that offered little support or dignity for people with disabilities, Larry famously declared, "Heck no! How can we allow this?" From that moment forward, he dedicated his life to advocacy, education, and systemic change.

Larry enrolled at the University of Alberta, determined to pursue a career he could excel in from a wheelchair. Like many young people of the era, he became an activist—only his focus was the rights and dignity of people with disabilities. With the support of family, friends, and allies like Percy Wickman, Larry led efforts that began transforming the world around him: wheelchair access in public buildings, accessible washrooms, para-ramps at street corners—each a milestone in a broader fight for equality.

Larry's professional journey reflected his deep commitment to this cause. He launched The Spokesman, a groundbreaking newspaper focused on disability issues—an early example of community building and advocacy through media. Later, he joined the Canadian Paraplegic Association (now Spinal Cord Injury Alberta), where he served as a counselor and eventually Director, helping others navigate life after injury. In retirement, Larry remained active as a consultant, designing barrier-free housing and advocating for inclusive communities.

Never content with the status quo, Larry championed independent living. Alongside friends and allies, he helped create housing models that centered dignity and accessibility—first as renters in staffed apartments, and then as pioneers of the Abby Road Housing Co-op, a fully accessible, affordable building designed from the ground up. His ultimate dream was home ownership for people with disabilities. Partnering with Christenson Developments, Larry secured land near Whyte Avenue and helped create Creek Side, a mixed community for both able-bodied and disabled residents. It became a model admired around the world. Larry's impact was so profound that several medical professionals asked to write about his life. He defied every expectation, surviving and thriving for 59 years after a C4 injury—a remarkable and possibly unprecedented achievement.

Larry, thank you. For your advocacy, your courage, your refusal to accept limitations. You made the world better—for the future generations, for the disabled community, and for all of us. Thank you for your dedicated work with Spinal Cord Injury Alberta and for the legacy you leave behind.
Rest in peace, Larry.

The Pempelt family extends heartfelt thanks to the support teams at Creek Side, Abby Road, Bader Towers, Grandview, and McQueen Group Home. Your care allowed Larry to live life to its fullest.

Celebration of Life will be held at 2:00PM Thursday, June 12, 2025
Bison Lodge (formerly the Pioneer Cabin)
9430 Scona Rd NW, Edmonton, Alberta

Memorial Donations can be made to:
[Alberta Abilities Lodges](#)
[Spinal Cord Injury Alberta](#) (formerly Canadian Paraplegic Association)

In the Media - New Documentary - We Were Broncos

We Were Broncos is a six-part documentary series that follows Ryan Straschnitzki, a survivor of the 2018 Humboldt Broncos bus crash, as he transitions from sledge hockey to wheelchair basketball in pursuit of a spot on Canada's Paralympic team. The series, produced by Regina-based Prairie Cat Productions, offers an intimate look into Straschnitzki's journey of resilience and adaptation in the face of life-altering challenges.

The documentary captures Straschnitzki's efforts to master wheelchair basketball, a sport he had not previously pursued, after being paralyzed from the chest down in the tragic crash that claimed 16 lives and injured 13 others. The series delves into his training, participation in tournaments, and the emotional and physical hurdles he faces, all while reflecting on his past experiences as a Humboldt Bronco. Each 30-minute episode provides viewers with a personal and inspiring narrative of perseverance and growth.

Episode 1 debuted on May 26th on AMI and AMI+ [Learn more here](#)

Wishing you a sunny and joyful June! Stay cool and take care!

- Kendra + Terry + Tristan

