



August Beneficiary

MATT WETHERBEE

On June 7, 2016, three days before my 29th birthday, I suffered a significant spinal cord injury (SCI) while playing basketball, a sport I love and have played since middle school. After my injury, I spent two months at Massachusetts General Hospital, followed by three months at Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital working on my intense recovery before I was able to go home and return to my new normal.



This new normal, however, would require an abundance of financial assistance. According to the Christopher Reeve Foundation, a person living with SCI will spend \$1,064,716 their first year post accident and \$184,891 each subsequent year. This is due to indirect costs like purchasing a motorized wheelchair, purchasing an accessible van, hiring personal care assistants, finding accessible housing or making major adjustments to current housing. These estimates do not include other indirect costs such as losses in wages. These estimates also do not include the cost of intense specialized rehabilitation therapy required in order to help the body's nervous system relearn the most basic tasks, which at minimum can be \$100 per hour and is not covered by insurance.

This is where The Greg Hill Foundation immediately stepped in. I had spent my entire career in Sports Marketing with a strong focus on charitable foundations, often working alongside Greg and his team in an effort to support their various charitable causes. After learning about my accident, Greg set up an online campaign fund to directly support me on my road to recovery. On Greg Hill's daily morning radio show, Greg was able to communicate my story and situation to his audience. Within days, The Greg Hill Foundation was able to raise \$146,395. I was amazed at the amount of donations coming in from total strangers. With the money that was raised, I was able to purchase an FES electrical stimulation bike that allowed me to exercise at home, as well as attend therapy workouts four days a week at Journey Forward in Canton, Massachusetts.

The amazing and immediate support I received from The Greg Hill Foundation and donors inspired me to launch the MW Fund. I realized first-hand how important it is for those living with SCI to have access to daily exercise and therapy, and to be able to offset any financial burdens associated with SCI. Oftentimes individuals do not have access to private therapy outside of the traditional rehab setting once they are cut off by insurance because of the cost. In fact, 60% of individuals attending therapy are on some form of financial assistance and have to discontinue their rehab program because of the cost, while 50% of those who apply cannot simply begin because of the cost. The MW Fund has since been able to award close to \$200,000 in financial assistance to individual therapy programs and to further support research initiatives developed for SCI recovery. I hope to be able to provide so much more, to so many more, as I continue to grow the MW Fund.

I currently live in Louisville, Kentucky where I am participating in epidural stimulation research at the University of Louisville. This research has resulted in many positive changes to daily life for me, and other participants, including the ability to stand, regulate blood pressure, move voluntarily, improvements in bowel and bladder function, and overall mental and physical health.

I recently married the love of my life, Kaitlyn, who has been by my side every day since this life changing event. My goal is to be able to provide so much more, to so many more, as I continue to grow the MW Fund and I thank The Greg Hill Foundation for giving me the support, inspiration and motivation to do just that.

Matt Wetherbee



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