



Spinal  
Injuries  
Ireland  
Support at every stage

# MONTHLY PRIZE DRAW

## **A small donation to make a big difference.**

People with spinal cord injuries are suffering more than most from the restrictions of lockdowns; unable to see friends and carers, being even more isolated than before. You can make a positive difference by donating just €7 a month to Spinal Injuries Ireland.

**MAKE IT YOUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION TO HELP THOSE WHO DEPEND ON ALL OF US  
– SIGN UP ON OUR WEBSITE TODAY.**

# Hello there,

I'm Jonathan Ranson, I'm 27 and this is my story.



Growing up I was very athletic and active having played Gaelic, tennis and football locally, along with rugby, football and athletics during secondary school in Belvedere College. Life was relatively care-free. I was 20 years old and had just completed my second year exams for my undergraduate degree in Business, Economics and Social Studies in Trinity College. Day to day life consisted of college, enjoying the student night life, working part-time in the family glazing business and playing football with my local club, Clontarf FC, and 5-a-side football with friends on weeknights. Studying and living in Dublin meant that I could live at home with my parents, Robbie and Deborah, and my older brother, Robert.

Following my exams, in May 2014, I travelled to San Diego, California, on a J1 working visa along with ten of my close friends to work for three months and enjoy the Californian summer. We lived in a one-bedroom apartment, sleeping on blow-up mattresses (proper J1 style). I had a job working in a beachside ice-cream sandwich shop called the Baked Bear. Life was great, I had very little worries, other than getting paid and making the most of my time off before returning to college.

**Thank you so much for considering supporting our Monthly Prize Draw.**

Regular support like this allows us to plan ahead with confidence, safe in the knowledge that we have a steady income, regardless of what kind of challenges might arise. This in turn gives our service users the confidence to know Spinal Injuries Ireland will always be there for them, for as long as they need us.



A friend of mine had just turned 21 on the day of the 2014 World Cup Final so we organised to go sky diving in the morning, followed by watching the final in the afternoon. Little did I know that, just over a week later, I'd be lying flat on my back in a hospital bed with only very limited movement in my arms and no movement below them and a long road ahead of me.

On July 21st 2014 the course of my life was altered completely. A lapse in concentration and an ill-judged dive into the shallow end of an apartment complex swimming pool resulted in me hitting my head on the bottom of the pool and, what I can only describe as, an electric shock hitting my body as all my limbs went numb. I immediately knew that something extremely serious was wrong. Luckily for me my friends were there and, having learned life saving while at Belvedere, they knew exactly what to do. Most importantly they knew not to move me and risk causing more damage. They held me above the water, reassuring me and keeping me calm, while we waited for the ambulance.

I had sustained a C6 Spinal Cord Injury, resulting in the immediate loss of sensation and motor function from my shoulders and below, with limited arm function and a long road to mental and physical recovery. Following two successful surgeries to stabilise my vertebrae and a two-month spell in UC San Diego Medical Center, I was airlifted by air ambulance to the Mater Hospital for six weeks and then to the National Rehabilitation Hospital in Dun Laoghaire for six months of rehabilitation.

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It was during my time in the NRH that I was first introduced to Spinal Injuries Ireland. They operated as a gateway back into society, bringing me to the Autumn International rugby match between Ireland and Australia in the Aviva Stadium along with various trips to the IMC Cinema in Dún Laoghaire. This gave me the confidence to engage back with society.

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The biggest challenge to adapting to life with a SCI was firstly accepting my situation as it was. Life was no longer going to be as straight forward as before. I would require assistance doing what I previously would have viewed as basic tasks, getting up, getting showered, getting dressed and personal care.







Once I came to terms with my new situation, I began to refocus my mind to figure out solutions rather than making excuses as to why I couldn't do something. I made the decision to look at how I could improve my situation which, for me, meant becoming more independent. I sought out the best physiotherapy and rehabilitation services that I could and worked extremely hard.

I wouldn't consider my life now to be any less than if I hadn't had my injury. Just like everyone I have my good days and my bad days, days when I'm highly motivated and positive and other days when I am not. My accident has allowed me to meet some wonderful people, has made me more empathetic and has given me a better perspective on the world. I've also been fortunate enough to have travelled to some amazing places all over the world over the past six years: South Africa, Japan (Rugby World Cup 2019), Australia, Canada, Liverpool (Anfield for numerous matches), London, Rome, Brussels, Edinburgh, Malaga, Marbella and Cardiff (Rugby World Cup 2015). Travelling around the world was inconceivable during those long months in The Mater and the NRH. The main lesson I've learned is the importance of having a purpose in life, a reason to get up in the morning, something to work towards. Goal setting has been the biggest motivator for me.

The first major goal and milestone for me was to return to college just six months after leaving the NRH to complete the final two years of my degree and subsequently graduating in 2017. Passing my driving test in early 2020 has also been a huge milestone for me, along with teaching myself to transfer into the car and dismantling my chair to lift it into the car has enabled me to achieve a level of independence I didn't see as possible just six years ago. In May of this year, in the middle of lockdown, I set myself a goal of completing a marathon using my hybrid hand-bike and in turn raising much needed funds for Spinal Injuries Ireland. It was a massive personal achievement with the added benefit of fundraising €17,250.

I'm currently studying for a Masters in Digital Marketing Strategy in Trinity Business School, with a mixture of online and in-class lectures. I've also been taking part in DCU's pilot exoskeleton programme on a weekly basis alongside my personal trainer, Oran Heron, who has been trained as an exoskeleton handler. Walking in the exoskeleton has become just another weekly part of my life, instead of football training. I've completed over 80,000 steps since I began over three years ago and 100+ sessions. Along with that I'm continuing my PT sessions five days a week and using my hybrid hand-cycle to get out, clear my head and get some cardio in.

Overall though I feel that I'm most proud of staying optimistic, maintaining a positive attitude and striving to be the best version of myself that I can be. None of which would have been possible without the constant, unconditional support from my family, my friends and my wider support network.

**Thank you,**  
*Jonathan*



### The Prizes:

1<sup>st</sup> Prize: **€1,000**

2<sup>nd</sup> Prize: **€500**

3<sup>rd</sup> Prize: **€250**

**The 3 cash prizes  
are available  
every month!**

### The Draw:

The first draw will take place on **Friday the 29<sup>th</sup> of January 2021**, which is the last weekday of January 2021 and monthly from then.

## How it works:

1. Tickets cost €7 each per month.
2. There is no limit to the number of tickets you can purchase.
3. You can buy a ticket either by filling in the form on the reverse of this page, or by visiting [www.spinalinjuries.ie/raffle](http://www.spinalinjuries.ie/raffle)
4. Once you have bought a ticket, we will email you confirmation of your purchase along with your ticket number/s. *(Please note, this confirmation can take up to 24 hours as our system waits to receive confirmation from the respective bank).*
5. Tickets can be bought on either a once-off ticket basis or a monthly ticket, which is the best way to support. With this monthly ticket, you will be issued a new ticket number by email on a monthly basis.

# DRAW MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

PLEASE USE BLOCK LETTERS

## Received From:

First Name: Mr / Mrs / Ms

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Surname:

.....

Address:

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Tel. (Home):

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Tel. (Work):

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Email:

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**I wish to enter the Spinal Injuries Ireland Monthly Draw and I will make my payments by:**

Yearly by Standing Order (**€84.00**)

Monthly by Standing Order (**€7.00 per month**)

Yearly by Cheque (**€84.00**)  
*Note: Please make cheques payable to Spinal Injuries Ireland*

Yearly by Credit/Debit Card (**€84.00**)

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CVV:

Expiry Date:  /

Type: Visa  MasterCard  Laser

Signed:

.....

(applicant)

# REQUEST FOR STANDING ORDER

To: The Manager

Bank:

.....

Branch:

.....

Date:

.....

BIC:

Please charge to my Account:

IBAN:

A/C Holder's name:

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## And pay to:

Name of Account: Spinal Injuries Ireland

Bank: Bank of Ireland

Branch: Phibsborough, Dublin 7

IBAN: **IE29 BOFI 9006 2321 0698 16**

(BIC): **BOFIE2D**

Draw Membership No. / Bank Reference

Bank: Please Quote Reference

The amount stated below at the specified intervals:

Frequency:	Monthly	Yearly
Amount:	<b>€7.00</b>	<b>€84.00</b>

Please delete unused options

Day of month: (if appropriate)

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Commencing with the first payment on:

Day Month Year

Amount in words:

.....

Signed:

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Address:

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Charity: kindly waive commission

PLEASE FOLD, SEAL AND RETURN IN THE ENVELOPE PROVIDED TO SPINAL INJURIES IRELAND.

Please do not send directly to the Bank.