

Portland Police Officer and Tualatin Resident Paralyzed in Freak Accident

On the morning of November 19th Portland Police Officer and Tualatin resident Paul Meyer was riding an ATV, finishing up a training exercise with fellow Portland Police Bureau officers on Hayden Island, when a 100-foot tree snapped and hit him on top of his head, smashing his helmet and crushing his back.

As a 20-year-veteran and member of the Portland Police Bureau's Special Emergency Response Team he realizes that it's a job where anything can happen, and you prepare for the possibility of being shot and killed, but this was a freak accident.

The impact from the tree caused severe spinal cord damage, leaving Meyer paralyzed from the waist down, so he is having to adjust to life in a wheelchair. Remarkably, Meyer's attitude towards this setback is incredibly positive and inspiring.

"Who cares about the legs being gone, I get to live," Meyer said. "I know I'm going to get frustrated with some things. I know things are going to get me upset," Meyer continues, "The alternative is that my kids are visiting me in a cemetery."

As a husband and father of two young boys said he understands life will now be different. His entire family will be part of the recovery process as this impacts them all.

Kate Morris, Meyer's physical therapist, said working with Meyer is inspirational.

"It is hard work, and he's learning how to move in a new body, and just every day he greets you with a high five and smile on his face," Morris says.

Meyer is learning how to balance on his own, and get in and out of a car from his wheelchair, along with other daily tasks. Morris said he is doing it with a broken collarbone. However, Meyer isn't complaining about being confined to a wheelchair.

With hope in his eyes, Meyer said he loves his job and wants to go back, eventually. Portland Police Chief Mike Reese has said he will hire him back, although he is not sure in what capacity. Right now though, Meyer is learning how to live without the use of his legs.

"I am so fortunate and so lucky to be where I am I can't believe it," Meyer said. "My wife Mary has done an amazing job keeping our family together."

Mary says "A lot of outsiders keep asking why we just don't sell and move? We can't imagine living anywhere else. We love Tualatin. Our neighborhood is AMAZING. We travel together, camp together, and have a huge 4th of July party. I could go on and on. Paul and I both were raised in Portland, and both went to Grant High. Then Paul went

on to Oregon and I to OSU, which makes for a very interesting marriage at times"

Because of the extensive modifications that need to be made to their current home, making it wheelchair accessible, their friends have set up a "Pay Pal" site at www.officerpaulmeyer.com if you would like to donate.

Paul and Mary Meyer are Tualatin residents and have two sons that attend Deer Creek Elementary.



ATV that Officer Meyer was riding when hit by tree



During a recent interview at Hospital



Damaged Helmet Officer Meyer was using.