



# Bruce's Story



## The Story That Inspires All

Bruce Kevan is a retired La Grande educator with a story about overcoming challenges like no other. His comeback from his spinal cord injury is proof that you don't have to allow outside situations or influence to define you. Instead, you define yourself and what you can and "can't" do.

Bruce experienced a bicycle accident nearly six years ago that caused him to suffer a spinal cord injury. While he was initially paralyzed from the shoulders down, and was left with an electric wheelchair to utilize as his mode of mobility, he never gave up on the goal to regain nerve and muscle function. To this day, he presses forward with his rehabilitation and has made incredible progress from his dedication.

Thanks to the Indego exoskeleton, Bruce is officially regaining the ability to walk. He started using it in October of 2020 at Mountain Valley Therapy; and with the help of his physical therapy team, he has walked over 3,000 meters thus far.

In time, that electric wheelchair will no longer be his method of moving around.

"It is an amazing feeling for me."

With the amount of progress that Bruce has made, and continues to make, his physical therapist, Rachael, believes that he will be able to walk on his own with the exoskeleton in just months.

Indego was not the first device that Bruce tried. He tried training in other devices earlier in his rehabilitation, such as various orthotics. These included an RGO (reciprocating gait orthotic) and a KAFO (knee and ankle foot orthotic). However, they were stiff and eventually limiting as recovery continued. And ultimately, they were only tools that helped him get started on his journey of recovery.

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With Indego, the training is more efficient, and more natural. He continues that journey and Indego has the means to support him, even up to training in advanced gait.

Indego has Bruce more ambulatory than he could have imagined since his injury. It was just easier to stand and walk again.

One day, for the first time in almost six years after his accident, Bruce was able to walk without a wheelchair or exoskeleton for more than 20 steps, with some assistance from his therapy team. That walk was the sign that his legs were receiving larger signals from his brain to move. That walk was the sign that he was getting stronger.

Bruce also has the cost of the exoskeleton covered by the State Accident Insurance Fund. He qualified for assistance from them due to his injury being work related; as his cycling injury was while he was heading to a meeting and working as interim principal at Central Elementary School. Since then, the SAIF has been covering everything and been supportive to Bruce.

SAIF is also aware of the incredible progress that Bruce has been making with his recovery, which further contributes to their funding of the exoskeleton.

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On top of everything, Bruce has become an inspiration, even to his therapy team. His therapist has said that she never has to motivate him, but he instead motivates her and the others. She has never seen a patient work so hard.

Despite being an inspiration to others, Bruce is incredibly grateful for everyone’s support with his injury and recovery, including his wife, family, and church. Their cheerleading and involvement have made an extraordinary difference.

The determination to move forward is still unlike any other recovery story. Instead of calling it quits after the injury, he instead became an optimistic beacon of light that has achieved more than many anticipated in six years. For Bruce, he is on the journey of a lifetime that he will never forget.

