



AS MOTIVATED AS THE REST SPINAL CORD INJURY DIDN'T SLOW NATHAN DOWN

HEALTH

Denice Barnes

SIX years ago Nathan Burley, of Killarney Vale, was instantly paralysed from the waist down after being accidentally hit by a javelin in the spine during an athletics night.

Now the 19 year old wants to speak out on behalf of the SpineCare Foundation as part of Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Week.

He is urging the community to recognise that people with spinal cord injuries are people too, and that their abilities should be celebrated over their disability.

Nathan did spend a few months in a wheelchair after the accident, but now all he has is a slight limp.

"I can do nearly everything," he said.

"I go to the beach, the gym, I play sports, hang out with my friends, and I even volunteer at my local athletics club."

He is a determined young man, just ask his mother Julie.

"He will give everything a go," she said.

Despite the alterations Nathan and his family had to make, their

victories are what keeps them going and this is what they want people to recognise, particularly during Spinal Cord Injury Week. "Just because people with spinal cord injuries have trouble walking or are in a wheelchair, it doesn't make us any less motivated as anyone else," Nathan said.

While he's currently working part time as a labourer, his dream is to get a full-time job and hopefully join the air force.

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AWARENESS WEEK

■ Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Week runs from November 6 to 12.

■ The week aims to raise awareness of the prevalence of spinal cord injury and celebrate the achievements of people living with the disability.

■ The SpineCare Foundation supports education, service provision and research in childhood conditions. It is a division of Northcott Disability Services which aims to build an inclusive society.



Nathan Burley is encouraging people to support Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Week.

Picture: WAIDE MAGUIRE