

Meet Brandon

Hello, my name is Brandon. I am 33 years old and I have spinal muscular atrophy and I want to share my story with you.

I live with my wife and Chico, my dog, in public housing. I am dependent on others for all of my care- to transfer out of bed to my power wheelchair, to bathe and to eat. In addition to my power wheelchair with power tilt and recline I use a voice activated computer, a blow activated phone and BiPap with oxygen at night to help me breathe. I have had many surgeries over the years that include a spinal fusion and knee/hip/ankle muscle releases.



It was quite a struggle to get my current wheelchair. As my disease progressed I was unable to use the joystick to control my old chair. Therefore I was unable to move around my apartment independently and was in one spot all day unless someone moved me. The company I use to use tried other ways to help me drive but none of the options worked. This process took several months. By the time I went to the hospital I was not able to drive my chair at all. Finally I went to their wheelchair clinic for evaluation and I met Kerry my new wheelchair equipment specialist. He was able to achieve where the other company failed. He gave me hope that I could actually drive again. Kerry and his company made all the difference because they knew what was available. He took me to a special trade show to meet with ASL, a company that makes special electronics to drive wheelchairs. I only have use of my right thumb and left index finger. Kerry was able to create a system for me to control my own wheelchair with my finger and thumb.

I am now free to move at my own free will. To go outside with my dog, to move about my apartment and to be able to get out in case of any emergency. I feel like a human being- just being able to take part in social activities, being able to turn my own chair to face someone or see something. If I did not have insurance coverage I wouldn't be living on my own, probably living in a nursing home. I would not be able to get the BiPap and oxygen that I need at night. And as far as the wheelchair it would be barbaric since I would be confined and living in discomfort.

If anyone has a hard time comprehending how important this is, try to imagine what it is like for even one hour not using their limbs or to get around independently and not be able to move your head- that is what it is like for me- every day.