

In August of 2009 I was involved in a serious car accident that nearly cost me my life. I suffered from a severe Traumatic Brain Injury, Six Broken Ribs, a broken scapula, lacerated liver, and lacerated spleen. When I was wheeled into the hospital they gave me a twenty percent chance to live, I still like to think of myself as someone who could always beat the odds, and beating them a full 80% is in one word- miraculous. I spent a little over 2 months in Moses Cone hospital where I received inpatient physical and occupational therapy, followed by another 2 months of outpatient rehab. Throughout this entire ordeal the Spears Family YMCA has stuck by my side and my families; they have been one of the biggest supporters of my recovery. They held a fundraiser on my behalf and I received an abundance of cards, letters and gifts from many members and staff of this YMCA. Not only were they here for me but they also were there for my family, in more ways than one could ever imagine or hope for.

I have been very involved in the Spears Family YMCA over the past year. I was the head lifeguard at the time of my accident and I also taught water aerobics, group and private swim lessons, and coached a 7-8th grade Girls Volleyball Team, known as the Panthers. The amount of support has been, in one word overwhelming, and I have to thank everyone because you all were a part of my recovery process. This was a time in my life where I truly knew that I had inspired people, something that I strive for every day of my life. In return to that was the inspiration that was given to me. Every day I was in the hospital I woke up thanking God for my life and on my first doctor's appointment out of the hospital he asked me one thing, "What do you want more than anything?" The answer to me was simple, "To get back to work and my students," was all I said. I worked every day to get back to full health, which included an enormous amount of physical and cognitive testing and I returned to work in January doing exactly what I did before. In short I have returned to work in 5 months, a feat which is hard to comprehend especially with the facts that were involved throughout this entire situation.

I have to thank all of the staff at the Spears Family YMCA for standing behind me, and all of my students and players as well. They are my inspiration. They have given me more strength than a million men could have provided me. One of my students gave me a bible verse that I pray every day and that I live by.

"Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, inwardly we are being renewed day by day. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but what is unseen. For what is seen is only temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." (II Corinthians 4 16-18)

I never lost heart or hope, and I know that everyone at the Spears Family YMCA shares in that promise as well. I hold inside of myself a will that cannot and will not be broken. Because of that I have come out of this a much stronger and spiritual person. I have been given a gift, the greatest gift given to anyone by God, the gift of life. I appreciate that gift every day. I thank you ALL from the depths of my heart and soul, and will continue to thank you forever.