

# THE JOSEPH GROH FOUNDATION

*A Beacon of Hope*

## The Lighthouse- From our Founder Joe Groh

Welcome to the Winter-Spring edition of the Lighthouse! Here in Texas that means a pretty mild winter is giving way to the blooming of red buds and the sound of lawns being mowed for the first time. The talk of baseball is in the air and the Rangers are generating a lot of excitement from their World Series win last year. The Dallas golf tournament is behind us and like last year, we will have a fourth tournament this year. See details regarding all our tournaments below. When talking with people about our foundation, sometimes we hear that we only help people in the HVAC trade, or that we only help people in Texas. Au contraire! The charts below tell a different story. Did you ever wonder why the cells in our brain and spinal cords are the only ones that do not regenerate following an injury? Read about a new study that is looking into that. In other disability health news, read about a surfer paralyzed by a wave who experienced a remarkable recovery following a treatment using stem cells taken from fat in his stomach! Next up is an article about Bobby Roundtree, Someone You Should Know. In 1987, Time Magazine published an article entitled, Why Is Service So Bad? So, what is the prognosis for customer service in America more than 35 years later? We have an opinion about that. Our latest grant recipient is a young man from Wisconsin whose home was at odds with his new life situation. Read about how we helped Joe Brunner resolve those issues. Author Joe Groh has written two books over the years, and his most recent book, Stepping Up, recently won 2 book award. Read more about it below. Finally, your favorite column (or at least mine) – A Day in the Life. Enjoy!



### Inside this issue

Golf.....	2-3
Statistics.....	4
Nerve Cell Regeneration.....	5
Stem Cells From Body Fat.....	6
Bobby Roundtree Someone You Should Know....	7
Customer Service.....	8
Latest Grant Recipient.....	10
Groh's Book Wins Awards.....	12
A Day in the Life.....	13-14



# 2024 GOLF WITH THE FOUNDATION

The 2024 golf season for the foundation is off and swinging! A short description of each tournament follows, including our rotating fourth event!



Heritage Ranch Course



Heritage Ranch Clubhouse

## **DALLAS – MONDAY, APRIL 29 ~HERITAGE RANCH GC, FAIRVIEW, TEXAS TITLE SPONSOR: LENNOX INDUSTRIES**

Heritage Ranch is located in a 55+ community and was rated as the #3 golf course in Dallas-Fort Worth East by Avid Golfer in 2020. This scenic course features rolling terrain, strategically incorporated water features, and fairways lined with aged Pecan, Oaks, and Cedars on its Arthur Hills design. The 24,000 square-foot rustic clubhouse is reminiscent of the grandest ranches of the Texas Hill country, with its handcrafted maple trim and beautifully adorned ballroom.

## **MINNEAPOLIS – MONDAY, JULY 15 ~ THE LINKS AT NORTH FORK, RAMSEY, MINNESOTA TITLE SPONSOR: DAIKIN APPLIED**

Since opening in 1992, the Links at North Fork, one of Minnesota's few true Scottish links style golf courses, has played host to prestigious golf tournament's such as the US Open Qualifier and the senior PGA 3M Qualifier. Rated 4 Stars by Golf Digest, the Links hosts the most complete practice facility in the Twin Cities from the all grass driving range to the 2 practice greens, chipping green, practice sand bunker and the par 11 three hole practice loop.





**CHICAGO – MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 16 ~SEVEN BRIDGES GC, WOODRIDGE, ILLINOIS  
TITLE SPONSOR: TITUS, RUSKIN & AIR PRODUCTS EQUIPMENT**

Since 1991, Seven Bridges has been renowned as one of the best public access facilities in the Midwest. Rated 4 stars by Golf Digest, Seven Bridges is recognized as one of the top five public courses in the Chicagoland area. The finely manicured course features 100-year-old Oaks, picturesque views, and of course, at least 7 Bridges!

**ORLANDO – MONDAY, OCTOBER 14 ~SHINGLE CREEK GC, ORLANDO, FLORIDA  
TITLE SPONSOR: SERVICE NATION**

This Arnold Palmer Design Company course has features reminiscent of the finest classic golf courses in the world. All 18 holes put strategy and variety at the center of the golf experience to inspire and challenge every type of golfer. Named in the top 100 public golf courses of America by Golf World Magazine, this course is home to the U.S. Open & US Amateur qualifying tournaments. With its computerized GPS yardage system, you will know your yardage to the pin from anywhere. It's undulating fairways, interconnecting waterways and a backdrop of dense Oaks and Pines create 7213 yards of unforgettable golf!



*Shingle Creek Golf Course*

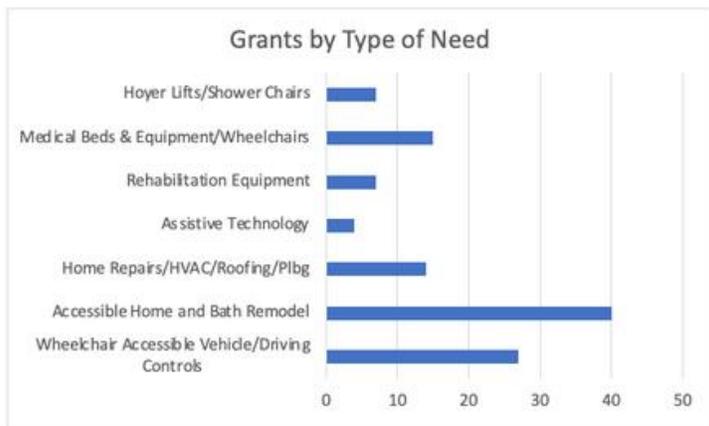
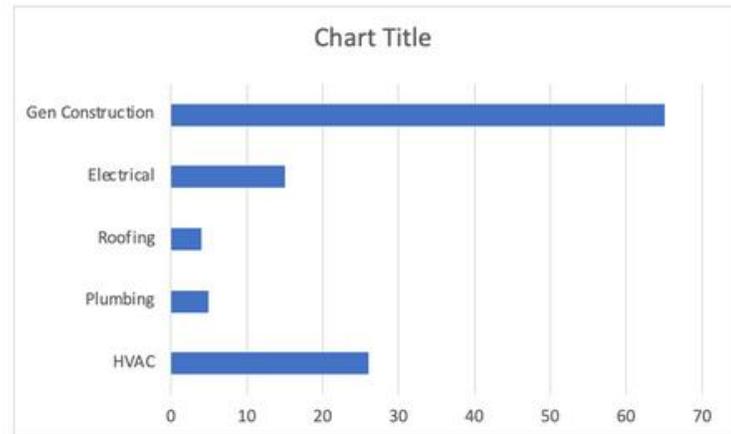


# LIES, BIGGER LIES AND OUR STATISTICS (WHICH NEVER LIE!)



## LOCATION OF GRANTS

## GRANTS BY INDUSTRY



## GRANTS BY NEED

# Unlocking A Secret Nerve Cell Regenerator

Our peripheral nervous system refers to parts of the nervous system outside the brain and spinal cord, and it knows how to regenerate the branches of its cells after an injury. Unfortunately, the cells in our central nervous system—our brain and spinal cord—are far more limited when it comes to regeneration.

Because of that, diseases such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and ALS, are irreversible and incurable. So, why can the peripheral nervous system regenerate while the central nervous system can't?

In a new study, researchers at the Weizmann Institute of Science have discovered a protein, previously known to be present only during embryonic development, that plays a key role in regenerating adult neurons in the peripheral nervous system. Now scientists can go on to examine whether and how it limits regenerative capabilities of the central nervous system. Essentially, these findings have inspired research groups to try and create new neurons in the brains of people with neurodegenerative diseases. In order to understand why the central nervous system fails to regenerate after an injury, scientists have to first understand the process of successful regeneration within the peripheral nervous system.

To read the full article, see the attached link.

[https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-08-secret-nerve-cell-regenerator.html#google\\_vignette](https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-08-secret-nerve-cell-regenerator.html#google_vignette)

# Stem Cells from Belly Fat Helps Surfer Walk Again



*Dr. Bydon (L) with Chris and Debbie Barr*

Chris Barr was ready to give up. A surfing accident in California in 2017 had left him with a neck that was broken in eight places & paralyzed from the neck down. He was so distraught as a result of his injuries that the first thing he mouthed to his wife Debbie when she arrived at his hospital bedside was, “Pull the Plug.” Needless to say, she was shocked.

A short time later Chet White, the friend who had dragged Chris’s body onto shore after his accident offered Chris some hope. “There are new developments every day, why would you throw in the towel? You’ve got nothing to lose,” Chet told him. Following a discussion with a Mayo Clinic neurosurgeon about a new stem cell trial, Chris learned he had everything to gain. “And at that point,” Debbie added, “it was game on!”

“Intervention starts when physical recovery has plateaued,” said Mayo Clinic neurosurgeon Dr. Bydon. “We do not want the intervention to take credit for early improvements that occur as part of the natural history of many spinal injuries.” Intervention consists of taking stem cells from the stomach fat of a patient and giving them time to multiply in a cultured lab setting. Then they are injected into the patient’s lower back where they migrate to the site of the patient’s injury. The research is preliminary but very exciting. For Chris, intervention came 11 months after his injury. By that time, surgery and months of intense physical therapy had only yielded limited improvement in his ability to move his arms and legs. At that point, Chris traveled to Mayo Clinic where he was enrolled as patient #1 in a 10 patient clinical trial which is testing the safety, side effects and ideal dosage of stem cells to use. While early results show patient response varies greatly, for Chris the response was both immediate and life-changing. “I can feel it,” he said of the initial stem cell injection. “I absolutely felt something in my legs.” Shortly after that Chris began seeing improvement in his PT and OT test scores, with each of them improving by 25-50% in his upper body extremities and 100% for his lower extremities. “The first time I started walking by myself, that was really something,” he said. It was something for the team of researchers at Mayo Clinic as well. The treatment remains experimental, and it is not yet approved by the Food and Drug Administration for large-scale use. According to Chris however, “Clearly something happened.” For more on this topic, follow the link below to the Mayo Clinic news network article.

[Our peripheral nervous system refers to parts of the nervous system outside the brain and spinal cord, and it knows how to regenerate the branches of its cells after an injury. Unfortunately, the cells in our central nervous system—our brain and spinal cord—are far more limited when it comes to regeneration.](#)

[Because of that, diseases such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and ALS, are irreversible and incurable. So, why can the peripheral nervous system regenerate while the central nervous system can't?](#)

[In a new study, researchers at the Weizmann Institute of Science have discovered a protein, previously known to be present only during embryonic development, that plays a key role in regenerating adult neurons in the peripheral nervous system. Now scientists can go on to examine whether and how it limits regenerative capabilities of the central nervous system. Essentially, these findings have inspired research groups to try and create new neurons in the brains of people with neurodegenerative diseases. In order to understand why the central nervous system fails to regenerate after an injury, scientists have to first understand the process of successful regeneration within the peripheral nervous system.](#)

To read the full article, see the attached link.

[https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-08-secret-nerve-cell-regenerator.html#google\\_vignette](https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-08-secret-nerve-cell-regenerator.html#google_vignette)

# Bobby Rountree – Someone You Should Know



## Bobby Rountree – Someone You Should Know

Bobby Rountree’s future was once filled with dreams of being in the NFL. In 2018 as a sophomore, he won the Illini’s top defensive player award – leading the team in sacks, tackles for a loss, and passes broken up. That future was put on hold on the night of May 18, 2019. Bobby suffered a spinal cord injury during a swimming accident in Florida – one that paralyzed him from the chest down. When Bobby’s mom saw him in the hospital, he told her not to cry over him, that he would be okay. After his injury, Bobby’s weight went from 255 pounds down to 170 pounds. “I didn’t know how skinny I was until one day I took the hospital covers off my legs, seen my legs and it broke me.” Bobby said. “It did something to me and made me want to take off and get back to my old self. It’s getting back to being me, knowing there will be ups and downs and knowing that it will be a long journey, but that’s what motivates me.”

Bobby’s mission did change but the workout routine felt very similar. “I’ve just got to keep the same mindset even if not working out to get to the NFL right now,” Bobby said. Seven months at the Shirley Ryan Ability Lab in Chicago built back his strength, followed by intense physical therapy five days a week at Barwis Methods in Port St. Lucie, Florida. “I feel I’m getting stronger and feeling more on the lower half of my body, and I’m thankful I am able to keep working out,” Bobby said. His mom Jill has been there every step of the way as his full-time caregiver. “He pushes himself so hard, sometimes I wish he would slow down, but he won’t and I love him,” his mom said. “She put down everything to come be with me,” Bobby said of his mom. “She stopped working as a certified medical assistant to take care of me, and I am very blessed to have her.”

Bobby remained on scholarship at Illinois, taking classes and watching his former team play from his home in Clearwater. “It is exciting but also sad because I probably would have made a difference out there on the field,” he reflected. “It was a lot of emotions, but I would do it again. It was fun.” Bobby used to play every snap like he had something to prove, and now he was out to prove that his injury won’t define him. Unfortunately, that journey came to an end with his sudden passing in the summer of 2021. “All of us with Illinois athletics are shocked and saddened by the sudden passing of Bobby Rountree,” Director of Athletics Josh Whitman said. “From his first day on campus, Bobby was a leader. His work ethic, competitive fire, and drive for excellence set him apart.” The day before his death Bobby shared one final positive message, which read “Stay humble and keep ELEVATING.” Words we can all live by.

# Why Is Service So Bad

If you are a Gen Z or Gen Alpha, you might have found yourself wondering why customer service seems so bad... or even nonexistent. Well, that is not a recent phenomena. In 1987 Time Magazine had a cover story in its February issue asking the question, Why Is Service So Bad? The article poses the fundamental question that if service industries are beginning to dominate the economy, then why is there so little good service to be found? That article bemoaned the fact that the US practically invented the concept of good service on a mass-market scale, which in turn gave rise to such pioneers as AT&T, IBM, American Express, McDonald's and Federal Express. It would have been hard at that time to imagine that service could have only gotten worse.

When this article was published, I was working as a business consultant for a large HVAC manufacturer. I purchased copies for all my contractor clients, and worked hard to spread the gospel about how good customer service could serve as a sustainable competitive advantage. If someone were to give you five seconds to cite an example of really top-notch customer service, could you? Back in the 1960s (I know, I'm old) I had a paper route in sixth through eighth grade. At the time, almost everyone subscribed to the hometown Peoria Journal Star, but the more discerning in our neighborhood subscribed to one of the Chicago papers (Tribune/Sun Times/American/Daily News) or the Wall Street Journal. I delivered the latter to neighborhoods in the West Bluff portion of the city. My customers expected their papers to be delivered by no later than 7:30 AM, and they expected their paper to be comfortably sandwiched between the screen door and front door. If you merely rode your bike past their residence and tossed the paper in the general direction of their front porch, you would have lasted about a week on the job. In the rare case of a home which didn't have a screen door, you are expected to put it securely under their front mat so it would not get rained/snowed on or blow away. In the event it did, you would find yourself delivering a second paper to them before school started.

My five second reply if asked would be Brett at Rockfish Seafood Grill in McKinney. We don't frequent there a lot, but when we do, he always asks us how our kids are doing – by name. He brings us water with lemon without our even asking because he knows that's what we like. We have seen him greet countless other customers by telling them he will be right out with their favorite drink by name, and I have never heard a customer correct his choice. Perhaps it's my imagination, but when it comes to portion size, he always seems to give me the "wheelchair bonus" serving. He has worked there for at least 10 years, so you know it is a worthwhile career and not just a job. If you live in Collin County and you need to satisfy your seafood itch, I encourage you to visit this restaurant on Eldorado Parkway, ask for Brett and experience some good old-fashioned, excellent customer service!

# TIME MAGAZINE



Read the Time Magazine  
Article Here

[https://content.time.com/time/  
subscriber/article/0,33009,963  
438-2,00.html](https://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,963438-2,00.html)

# FOUNDATION RECIPIENT

## JOE BRUNNER



**Joe Brunner with his wife Kozi, daughter Evie and son Rhett**

Joe worked as a finish carpenter for Steen Construction out of Osseo, Wisconsin for 15 years leading up to his accident. Steen is an area homebuilder, and in the past year Joe had transitioned to a project manager position. Joe enjoyed riding dirt bikes on the many trails in the Clark County Forest. He had ridden these trails since his youth, and he knew them well. One early hot Friday last summer Joe decided to go for a ride even though he couldn't get any of his friends to accompany him and he did not like riding alone. He had not been out all year however, so he decided to go anyway. He was about halfway through his favorite trail when it came to a spot that had been clear-cut over the winter. It looked different, and just then he saw the sign for a 90° corner to the left by a small bump in the trail. He braked as hard as he could and started turning, but then saw the front tire of his dirt bike starting to slide and go off the edge of the trail. The result was a hard fall with Joe landing on his stomach. Joe suffered a T4 SCI with many broken fingers & ribs along with a punctured lung! Joe remembers not being able to move his legs but thinking it couldn't be anything serious. Certainly, being paralyzed never seemed like a possibility. When a group of four wheelers went by without stopping, he wondered how far off the trail he had fallen. He worked with difficulty to retrieve the phone from his backpack and was worried when he saw only one bar. He called 911 but the call dropped right away. Fortunately, they called back and dispatched police and medical help. By the time the police arrived he still felt no pain, but that changed in a big way once they loaded him on a stretcher. He was Care Flighted to Mansfield where he had surgery, then transferred to Eau Claire where he began physical therapy. "I know I thought before my accident that it would be tough to live with paralysis, but you have no idea until you are actually living it," Joe said. About one month after his accident, he transferred to a rehab hospital in Lincoln, Nebraska where Joe says, "the real rehab started." Joe remained there for the next three months before he was able to go home and start outpatient rehab.

Kozi was able to take a leave of absence from her position as a critical care nurse for Mayo Clinic in Eau Claire. They had a lot of other help from family members with the kids and the house. They decided the biggest item they would need help with after returning home was to take up the carpet in the master bedroom and replace it with hard surface flooring. Simultaneously, they would also need to remodel the bath for disability access. The biggest problem, however, lie with the fact that the master bed and bath were on the second floor! That means they would need a stair lift to get up to the second floor. Kozi discovered the foundation while doing online research and petitioned us for assistance with these items. Meanwhile, Joe's employer worked with them to make modifications in the bath so that he could access it.

Thanks to our gracious donors, we were able to fund the flooring and chair lift!

Following the installation of these items Joe sent a note that said, "Normally I would say you don't know how much this means to us. Only I know your situation and I know you do – thank you very much from both of us!"



*Foot of the Stairs*



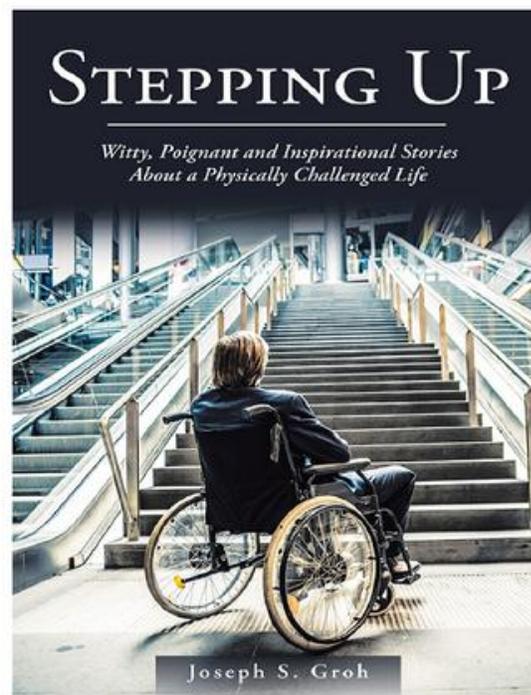
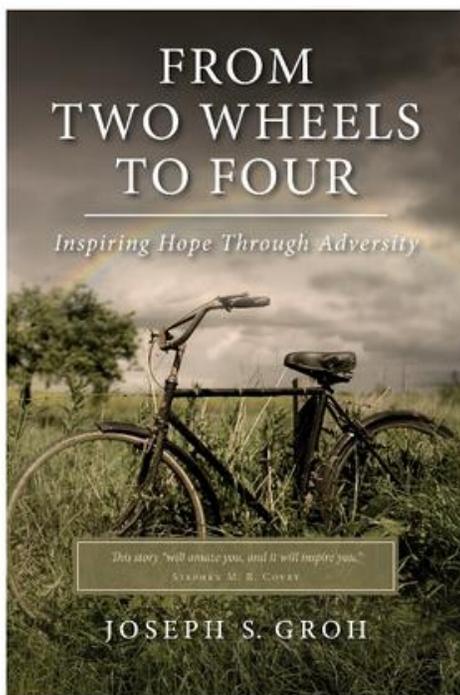
*Custom Engineered Turn*



*Straightaway toward the Top*



*View from the Top*



## AWARD WINNING

### Award-Winning Book!

A strange thing started happening last fall. I began to get calls – lots, and lots of calls from marketing companies who wanted to market the two books I had written. Ostensibly, they wanted to represent my books to both book publishers and Hollywood script writers, “For the possibility of making a movie from them.” I initially dismissed these calls as spam and simply ignored them. When they continued however, I called a few of them back to see if they really knew anything about my books – and they didn’t. I continued to ignore them, but the calls kept coming. At some point earlier this year it dawned on me to figure out why they might really be calling.

I did some online research and found that there are a number of book festivals in the spring that are perused by book publishers and Hollywood script writers. One of the groups behind these book festivals is an organization called JM Northern Media. They hold a large festival in the Los Angeles area, and a number of regional festivals in the Northwest, Southwest, Midwest, Northeast and Southeast. The first of these festivals to be held was in the Midwest, and the Los Angeles Festival is held in April. I decided to enter my book *Stepping Up*, in both the Midwest and Los Angeles book festivals. Each of these festivals provides awards to the top 10 books; Festival winner, Runner-up and 8 honorable mentions. Prizes are awarded for; 1. General excellence in the authors passion for telling a good story, & 2. The potential of the work to reach a wider audience.

Imagine my shock when I received a notice letting me know that *Stepping Up* had one an honorable mention at both the Midwest Festival and Los Angeles Festivals! Terrific, I thought. Someone else appreciates my offbeat humor and strange way that I look at life sometimes. I did not enter my first book, *From Two Wheels to Four*, because it had been published beyond the dates of books required at this festival. I shamelessly take this opportunity however to invite you to take a look at these books if you have not read them, and consider ordering them off Amazon. Please note, 100% of the proceeds from these books goes toward the foundation.

<https://www.josephgrohfoundation.org/webapp/p/202/book-from-two-wheels-to-four>

<https://www.josephgrohfoundation.org/webapp/p/203/book-stepping-up>

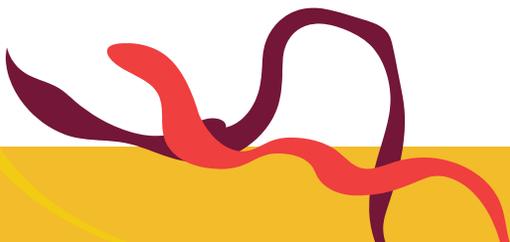
## A Day in the Life

This feature is a sometimes humorous, sometimes offbeat, and sometimes irreverent look at life as seen through the eyes of a severely disabled person. Management takes no responsibility for these ramblings. The selection taken from the book *Stepping Up*.

## Grandfathers

My mother's father died 10 years before I was born, so the only grandfather I knew was my dad's father. "Granddad" resembled in every respect someone you would think of in an individual who carried that title. He seemed old, yet wise, frail, yet strong, and he had our collective respect as grandchildren. I can remember how he would ponder answering a question as he looked upward through his eyeglasses, with smoke curling from his pipe. He was born in 1895, the same year as the radio but before there were cars and airplanes. He likely did not remember crossing over into the 20th century, yet he would live to see many of the marvels created during that century. Like many of his generation, he did not finish high school, instead going to work as an itinerant sheet metal worker. At the age of 22, he joined the military as part of America's entry into World War I. A newspaper report at the time said he would probably go to work in the Navy shipbuilding yard, but in actuality he was assigned to a machine gun company in the 148th infantry, and saw action in the Argonne Forest and on the Flanders front in Belgium. During the war, he was hospitalized for a few days after being "slightly gassed", and suffered a bullet wound in the arm while in Belgium. When he came home from the war in 1919, he bought a sheet metal and roofing business that is still in existence today.

Recently, I became a grandfather for the first time, and so now I receive the torch for this title from my father. I think of the world my granddaughter will grow up in, and there is one thing I am very sure of. Whatever I imagine it to be, it will likely be very different than that. When my grandfather saw his first car, I doubt he envisioned the day when such vehicles would race around an oval track at speeds in excess of two hundred mph. Similarly, when he saw his first airplane, I doubt he could envision that this invention would lead to supersonic flight, travel to outer space, and a manned landing on the moon – all in his lifetime! So I can only extrapolate the adult world my granddaughter will inherit based on what we can envision today. She will likely be the first generation to never get a driver's license, as perhaps all of her cars will be driverless. Perhaps she will become a regular globetrotter, the beneficiary of hypersonic, suborbital flight. As mayor of a small town in Kansas during the nineteen fifties, my grandfather made the first official telephone call over that town's direct distance dialing system.



Today, we are in the dawn of the IoT, and only ten years into the widespread use of smart phones. Based on the speed of technological change, I would hate to venture a guess as to what the world of information technology will look like when my granddaughter becomes a grandmother. When my grandfather was born, his life expectancy was about fifty years. Given today's nutrition and medical technology, my granddaughter may well usher in the 22nd century when she is eighty-two. She will be in good company, the earth is projected to have 11 billion inhabitants by then, up from about 1.6 billion when my grandfather was born. She will surely remember me as the grandfather in the wheelchair, not ever knowing a time when I ran around the park with her, kicked around a soccer ball, or drove her to get an ice cream cone with Grandma. I hope however she will see the day when spinal cord injuries such as mine are a thing of the past, either through a direct cure, or an easily managed workaround. The idea of having a successful career with less than a high school education will surely seem quaint, hers will be one of lifelong learning. She will likely make many, if not all of her consumer purchases through whatever online device that is prevalent in her day – a trend that began in her grandfather's lifetime.

Just some musings from someone who seems old, yet hopefully wise, frail, yet stronger than he might look – Makayla's grandfather. Welcome to the world little one!



**6 in 10**  
people worry  
about the  
financial impact  
of a disability,  
yet only **30%**  
own disability  
insurance.

A green line-art icon of a person with their arms raised, holding up three dollar signs (\$).

Source: LIMRA and Life Happens 2013 Insurance Barometer Study

*Protect your paycheck with disability insurance.*

LIGHT YOUR BEACON FOR THOSE IN THE CONSTRUCTION TRADES LIVING WITH  
DISABILITIES

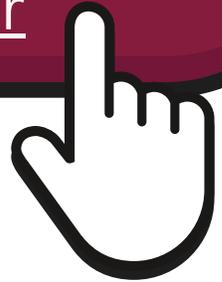
– BECOME A LUMINARY TODAY –

[Click Here](#)



**SIGN UP**

Newsletter



# Thank You

## Business Partners



