



Rick Hansen: Canadian Athlete, International Hero

Rick Hansen isn't just a man with a spinal cord injury- in fact, he's dedicated his life to showing society that people with disabilities are just as capable as anyone else. If you don't know much about this Canadian hero, its time you learnt just how lucky we are to have him...and why no one should stop reaching for the stars... no matter what obstacles one may face. As a celebrated athlete and a man dedicated to making a difference, Rick Hansen is a true Canadian hero.

When he was 15 years old, Rick sustained a spinal cord injury (SCI) in a car crash. This left him paralyzed from the waist down. Rick slowly came to terms with his new life, as many with brain or spinal cord injuries do. Though this transition was challenging, Rick didn't let this hold him back from achieving anything in life. After months of rehabilitation, Rick returned to his first passion: sports. Rick's story is something we can all learn a lot from. His positive attitude and famous saying "anything is possible" was a catalyst sending him off into a new world without barriers. Rick went on to win 19 international wheelchair marathons, including six medals as the worlds greatest Paralympian. It doesn't stop there for Rick. Inspired by the dream of a world accessible and inclusive for everyone, Rick set out on his legendary journey: the Man In Motion World Tour. On March 21, 1985, Rick set out to wheel more than 40, 000 km through 34 countries. He raised \$26 million for SCI research and quality of life programs. He also set the stage for changing the attitudes and beliefs of the world regarding the abilities of people with disabilities. Today Rick is the President and CEO of the Rick Hansen Foundation where he has helped raise over an astounding \$200 million for SCI research and quality of life programs. Through his efforts, he has continued to improve the prognosis for newly injured individuals and have improved support and care for people living with SCI. Rick continues to dream of a cure for SCI and believes that his best work is in front of him. His Foundation continues to grow internationally and his passion and commitment to making an incredible difference in the lives of others continues. Born August 26, 1958 in Port Alberni, British Columbia, Rick was an active child who enjoyed fishing, camping, and playing ball. Rick was athletic and competitive, with his first big dream being a Canadian Olympian. At age 15, Rick and his best friend decided to hitchhike home after a fishing trip. They accepted a ride offered in the back of a pickup truck. On the way home, the truck skidded off a winding road, throwing Rick and his friend out. Rick's friend was fortunate and walked away with a few cuts and bruises, but Rick was left with a shattered spine, unable to walk ever again. Rick spent seven months in rehabilitation in Vancouver. He then returned home to his parents' house in Williams Lake. While Rick initially felt discouraged and frustrated with his new life, as he spend a lot of time comparing his previous life to his new one. Once he was able to stop the comparisons and "see the possibilities", it was easier for him to face the challenge of his new situation. Rick didn't let his injuries get him down anymore and was determined to lead a fulfilling and meaningful life. He never gave up fishing and found ways to stay active in sports. Rick enrolled in the University of British Columbia in 1976 and became the first person with a disability to graduate with a Degree in Physical Education. It was there that Rick met another soon to be Canadian hero, Terry Fox, as he was undergoing chemotherapy. The two became close friends training, competing. He and his wife

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Amanda have three daughters. As fervent as he is about fishing, he is also interested in environmental issues and volunteers some of his time to help create the Fraser River Sturgeon Conservation Society. He also helped create the Pacific Salmon Endowment Fund with the goal of restoring salmon stocks in British Columbia. Rick also spends time encouraging and supporting Youth through school programs

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