

**“Thanks to the work of an administrator,  
I can lead a life as full as anybody  
else in the community.”**

I had just turned 30 when I slipped and fell. This accident led to a spinal cord injury that rendered me a high level quadriplegic, with some mobility to do basic activities.

When the accident occurred in 1995, I had already earned a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in Political Science, and always wanted to pursue a journalism career. After I got out of the hospital, and got some experience living independently, I went back to school to earn my communications diploma.

It was the instrumental work of an occupational therapy administrator that enabled me to achieve my goals. This administrator helped create the Assistive Technology Access and Resource Centre (ATARC) at the Health Sciences Centre in Winnipeg, in response to two factors. First, assessments and training in assistive technologies had become recognized as methods for persons with disabilities to gain independence in self care, work, school and leisure activities. Second, it was determined that access to assistive technology services for hospital clients was inadequate.

The ATARC provided assistive technology services, by working closely with engineers, to persons who were newly injured, were active in rehabilitation programs and/or were living in the community. I was therefore able to make my way through school, pursue various hobbies, and become a communicator in my own right.

I was given two pieces of equipment that have changed my life. The first was a set of headphones that were modified to use for both my laptop and my cell phone. Since I don't have use of my hands, using headphones that are compatible with both pieces of equipment meant I didn't have to worry about switching between the two.

Voice software enabled me to earn my communications diploma. I spoke into a microphone, and the program took my spoken word and translated it into text on my monitor. This has been the most important tool to becoming a professional person. I had access to equipment not available on the market.

Since earning my communications diploma in 2004, I have been working as a communications coordinator for the Canadian Paraplegic Association and now plan on pursuing my freelance journalism career, which includes producing documentary videos and other creative works.

I couldn't imagine completing my schooling and moving into the professional world without the access I've had there. My life has become more comfortable, more enjoyable, more livable and more diversified recreationally.

Now at age 41, I am planning to move from a building where I live with a group of disabled people who share attendant services, to jumping out and buying my own home and living in the community.

I know that occupational therapy helps. It is usually the starting point to solving problems and it is a phone call away.



**Occupational Therapy – Skills for the job of living!**

**For more information on occupational therapy or to find an occupational therapist near you, please visit [www.otworks.ca](http://www.otworks.ca)**

