

Cull tells students he's lucky to be alive

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hopeful, to purchase a new racing wheelchair.
"I was honoured to have received this new wheelchair," said

the 17-year-old, who was born with spina bifida, a defect that happens in the first month of pregnancy when the spinal column doesn't close completely.

But, as Hawtin told students and teachers Friday, that hasn't stopped her. She's been wheelchair racing since age five, and her most recent achievements include win-

ning gold in the 1,500 meter and silver in the 400 m at the 2005 Canada summer games, news that had Abbey Park students loudly applauding.

"I also entered my first marathon in Detroit. I won that too," she said, smiling, again to loud claps and cheers.

Last year, Hawtin was named female athlete of the year for Ontario wheelchair sports, and while she's currently nursing an injury, expects to be training again soon for the Junior World Championships in July. She's also hoping to qualify for the World Championships in August.

"My big goal is to make the Paralympic team to represent my country," she said.

Her final message: "If you know anybody with a spinal cord injury, please get them involved in sports, because they need to be active and out in the community. Don't let them just sit around doing nothing."

Cull, who told students about his life-altering accident in 1991, had similar positive messages for students. He said he considers himself a better person today than he was before his accident.

"I'm a pretty lucky guy," he said. "Doctors were telling me I was going to die."

He spent 10 months in intensive care with "tubes coming out of everywhere" and a steel rod in his neck. "I remember the doctor telling me I'm never going to walk again and he was crying," said Cull.

"I was thinking, 'Buddy, let's carry on. There's got to be some way I can be active.'"

Since his accident, Cull has volunteered with a number of endeavours, including Ontario March of Dimes and Board for Peel Association for Handicapped Adults.

He's also the president of CharterAbility, which he founded in 2003 to promote accessible boating and to provide a fully accessible, charter boat service on Lake Ontario for groups of people of all ages with disabilities or mobility impairments.

He has been investigating similar initiatives for the 'Cruise for Cause' beyond Ontario to span the Atlantic from Chicago to England.

Cull, who now has the use of his arms, but not his fingers, credited his family and girlfriend for helping him get to where he is today.

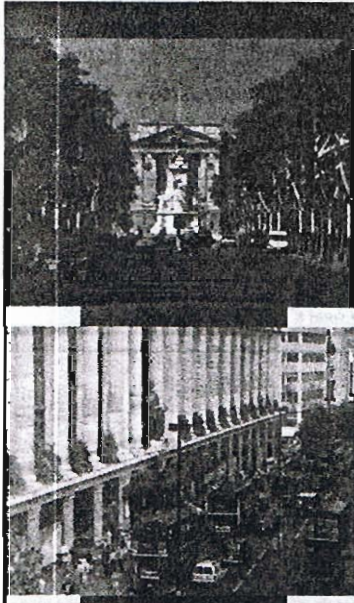
"That support is so important. That's the kind of thing that makes me a lucky guy," he said, noting that Grade 9 Abbey Park student, Nick Shoenoff, who last year was in a snowboarding accident that left him confined to a wheelchair, was receiving similar help from friends and family.

"One of the reasons Nick's not doing a lot of crying is because he has the support of everyone in this gymnasium," Cull said to loud applause and cheers from the Abbey Park crowd.

Oakville's Wheels in Motion event is set for June 11 at the Burl-Oak Canoe Club. A fundraising breakfast for Wheels in Motion is being held at Timothy's World Coffee in downtown Oakville on Sunday, May 28 from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Breakfast at Timothy's will feature a pancake breakfast and an information session.

To find out more about Wheels in Motion visit www.wheelsinmotion.org.





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Conventional medical therapy for allergies involves desensitizing

the body by using antihistamines or corticosteroids. Natural medicine aims to strengthen the body by working specifically at optimizing the function of the immune system. In so doing, our bodies are better capable of dealing with the allergens we come into contact with.

In developing a treatment plan that best suits a patient's needs, Naturopathic Doctors take into account each person's particular characteristics when assessing health problems. As a result, patients with similar allergy problems may not necessarily receive the same treatment protocols.

Following are some recommendations for natural allergy treatment:
Diet: Avoid milk and dairy products. They are often allergenic and increase mucus production. Decrease sugar intake, as it weakens the immune system. Eat whole foods such as grains, legumes, fresh fruits and vegetables.
Supplements: Vitamin A stimulates and enhances the immune system.

Vitamin C helps the body deal with foreign invaders (i.e. allergens). Vitamin E increases the immune system and its ability to deal with allergens. Quercetin acts as a mast cell stabilizer, preventing histamine release and thereby reducing acute allergic and inflammation responses. Grape Seed Extracts are mast cell degranulation inhibitors with a similar function to quercetin.

There are many natural approaches to manage and treat seasonal allergies. It is recommended to consult with a Naturopathic Doctor in order to discern which supplements are the best for you.

Alene Falomo B.Sc., N.D. is a Naturopathic Doctor practicing at the Mississauga Naturopathic Clinic. She can be reached at 905-567-8113.

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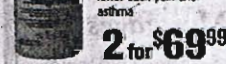
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