

People

## Where There's a Shane Will, There's a Way Back from Misfortune

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His mom always called him 'Shane Will.' But the name didn't assume its full significance until December, when Detroit Senior Audit Associate **Shane William Dwyer** was partially paralyzed in a freak accident.

"Now it means Shane *will* recover," says Dwyer, "and Shane *will* succeed."

Helping him honor that vow are hundreds of people and tens of thousands of dollars pledged to his recovery by colleagues, friends, and family in Michigan and beyond.

"Our office takes great pride in being able to support Shane at this most difficult time," says Detroit Managing Partner **Heather Paquette**.



Shane Dwyer

### CPA and Sportsman

A lifelong athlete, Dwyer played high school hockey on the team that won the 2005 Michigan state title. He went on to captain the team and also competed at an international tournament in Prague before giving up the sport to focus on his accounting education. But his love for activity continued. As a snowboarder, he navigated some of the nation's toughest peaks before his 2014 winter vacation in northern Michigan.

He was barreling down an ordinary hill on December 19 when a massive unmarked hill of snow loomed ahead. Unable to stop, he slammed into it at top speed, breaking several ribs, puncturing his lung and snapping his vertebrae.

"I immediately couldn't feel my legs, and I knew what that meant," he recalls.

Airlifted to safety, Dwyer underwent major surgery, but doctors could not restore movement to his legs. He was classified as a T3 paraplegic, paralyzed from the chest down.

"When I learned I wouldn't be able to walk, I realized there was nothing I could do to change it. I just had to keep a positive attitude and remind myself that I just needed to get better and get on with living life – a *different* life," says Dwyer.

With lifetime medical costs projected to exceed \$2 million for a wheelchair-bound 25-year-old, KPMG immediately rallied to the cause, contributing to several events that raised almost a quarter million dollars for Dwyer's ongoing care.



Shane with friends before the accident.

### Fundraisers

The lion's share came from a "Hockey Has Heart" event where Paquette, Audit partners **Darrin Schultz**, **Megan Wietfield**, **Dan Langlois**, and **Joe Kowalski** and many other colleagues collected more than \$12,000. KPMG also sponsored a special T-shirt campaign and held a jeans day/ Shane Will fundraiser at the Detroit office.

"The people around me – from coworkers to friends, family, and my girlfriend - have all been a great support. Their help and outpouring of generosity has made everything surprisingly less difficult than I anticipated," says Dwyer.

Now undergoing extensive physical therapy to prepare for a totally independent existence, Dwyer drives a customized car and has a specially outfitted apartment waiting for his arrival. Meanwhile, KPMG colleagues are sharing encouraging words, fundraising help, and appropriately motivating gifts of candy and snacks.



Shane surrounded by some of his adoring fundraisers.

"The partners said they would be there for me the whole time and my job would be available, which gave me peace of mind. I think of my colleagues as more than coworkers; they're family," he says.

Dwyer plans to bring his characteristic sunny outlook and strong will back to the Detroit office in July, picking up where he left off – with one major change.

"Now, I appreciate things more than ever before," says Dwyer.

"I realize how much I have and how easy it can be to lose sight of the support a great family, friends, and company provide. And, through meeting others with spinal cord injuries, I realize I am lucky. I can't wait to get back into the daily routine."

Written by [Sue Treiman](#)



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