

ada, more commonly used in Asia and Europe, but they are not approved by Health Canada and therefore are not covered by medical insurance. The more they learned, the more they came to believe that these treatments may work for me though they were prohibitively expensive and came with no guarantee.

My friends and coworkers saw a chance to mobilize and make a difference in my life. Within a few weeks, funds were raised by donations from friends, family and my former colleagues at Molson Breweries.

My mother accompanied me from RCH to the Richmond Hyperbaric Health Center, 5 days a week via ambulance, and for a few months, put a sponge with some water on it while I was in the chamber which would make me swallow and equalize the pressure within my ears. It worked and on Christmas Eve 2006, the Coss family received the greatest gift they could hope for. After three HBOT treatments and half a year in a coma, I awoke and uttered my first words.

Only three months out of my coma, I learned about Rick Hansen Wheels In Motion, an annual event held in communities across Canada to raise funds for research and to improve the quality of life for people with spinal cord injury. I was truly inspired by Rick Hansen even before I was injured and I wanted to be part of it. In the midst of my rehabilitation, I canvassed my network and once again they rallied in support. Friends, families, and Molson coworkers and other corporations helped me raise over \$22,000. My team (Team Cosco) not only won the award for the Top Fundraiser in Canada for Wheels in Motion 2007, we also set a fundraising record for the entire six-year history of the program.

From that moment on, I was on the road to recovery. Through a long, intensive and gruelling rehabilitation, I re-learned how to talk, eat again, and I am currently re-learning how to walk. The old Mike Coss has died and is now gone away, the new Mike Coss is re-born and he has a renewed focus.

I currently reside in a group home near my wife and children whom I see several times a week. My long term goal is to be an able and active participant of my family's lives. I am very THANKFUL of my support network, including my family, my friends, coworkers, all of the support members, including OT/RN/Dietician and Speech and Language Pathologist and my residential care workers who provide the Activities of Daily Living support.

My family is the reason why I work so hard on my rehab each day. My wife and children, my parents and brothers and their families, my friends and my co-workers are the reason that I get up each day and work so hard.

I have begun to write a book about my experiences and have plans to speak publicly to share my inspirational story. Ultimately, like my hero Rick Hansen, I plan on raising money to provide funds to other brain injured individuals who face similar challenges and who could benefit from HBOT but are unable to pay for it.

I am not ready yet to run the Boston Marathon but at least I am training for it.

Michael Coss, Cosco30@hotmail.com



Thank You from Michael Coss

I would like to acknowledge and THANK several people who have impacted and made a difference in my life. The first person that I would like to commend and THANK is my wife, Ann Coss.

Not only has she found the time to come and visit me several times a week with our children, she has been very busy raising our children, paying all the bills, running a household, taking our children to pre-school twice a week, taking our dog "Murphy" for a walk, entertaining our neighbours and maintaining a smile on her face, considering the circumstances; she is an amazing woman.

Next, I would like to THANK my parents who re-located to Vancouver from Quebec City the day after my injury leaving family, friends, and co-workers behind. They have been a huge support for my family and see me daily and have searched for various therapies that I should undertake to further improve my rehabilitation. THANK YOU for deciding to take the route of HBOT for me as this enabled me to awaken from my 6 1/2 month COMA.

My in-laws, Mark and Jenifer Bartlett are the next people that I would like to commend and acknowledge. They have helped us out by babysitting our children, helped prepare meals, assisted Ann with household chores like take our big baby "Murphy" for a walk, and even take out the garbage and mow our lawn.

There are numerous others that I would like to THANK like Ken Endo, Rachel Dumas, Joe and Vanessa Lozinski for coming to see me while I was in the hospital and also at the group home that I reside in. I would like to mention my former boss at Molson, the person who hired and trained me, Ronnie Paterson. He was my mentor and I would go to bat for him. He organized and held numerous fundraisers for me to raise some money so that I could undergo HBOT which enabled me to awaken from my 6 1/2 month COMA. The staff and manager of the Cheshire Homes Society of B.C., Larkin House, the group home that I reside in, for teaching me the skills to become independent again and all the various people that have worked with me the last 2 years, Janis Duvenstein, Francine Miller, Sue Mckrimmon, Mary-lynn Corpuz, Bonnie Ritchie, Dan Carlson, Martha Rodriguez and all the doctor's and nurses who looked after me at Eagle Ridge and Royal Columbian Hospital. Many thanks to all of you; I'm sure that I am going to run The Boston Marathon in the near future.

Michael Coss