



## Spinal cord injury awareness

Golf tournament to benefit local man.

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# Local man helps while he copes

By Jim Good  
Staff Writer

Washington Twp. resident Tony Peth hopes to one day open a research facility to aid those with spinal cord injuries.

In the meantime, he is coping with one of his own.

Peth, 28, a 1991 Centerville High School graduate, recently suffered physical injuries that left him a quadriplegic. Due to the tremendous emotional and physical stress placed on Peth and his family, the community is rallying in support.

The "Tee Off For Tony Peth," a golf outing fund-raiser and spinal cord injury awareness event, will begin at 1:30 p.m. with a shotgun start on Thursday, Aug. 3 at Beaver Creek Golf Club, 2800 New Germany-Trebein Road.

The cost is \$100 per golfer that includes 18-holes of golf, a cart, cookout supper and prizes.

On Aug. 1, 1999, while completing the final stretch of a mountain bike, running and obstacle-course event in San Diego, where he was attending school, Peth broke his neck, fracturing his fifth cervical vertebra. It rendered him a quadriplegic (paralysis from the neck down).

Since then, he has undergone intense physical rehabilitation in both San Diego and here in Dayton that has resulted in some arm, shoulder and wrist functions.

Specifically, he can "pull but can't push" and is able to move his wheelchair with exertion from his biceps and shoulders. His hands aren't operable, but he can move his left wrist a little.

"I'm doing as well as I can expect or even better," Peth said. "I've seen people in a lot worse situations than I'm in."

The golf event hopes to serve two purposes: to raise funds to buy Peth a mod-



Submitted Photo

**Tony Peth with his girlfriend, Ashley Porter.**

ified van to allow easier transport by family and friends and to raise community awareness about spinal cord injuries.

Peth said the van would greatly ease the burden placed on friends, family and himself. Since he is limited in mobility, he must be physically lifted in and out of a vehicle.

With the purchase of a modified van, he could enter on his own volition — and one day — drive the van himself due to the advanced technology of such vehicles.

Peth completed a bachelor of science in exercise physiology at Miami University and a master's of science in physiological sciences at the University of Arizona. Due to his intelligence and academic achievements, Peth was recruited

by top universities, eventually choosing the University of California, San Diego, to study in the Ph.D. biomedical sciences program for the fall of 1999.

But due to his tragic accident, he was unable to begin his advanced courses.

Miraculously, Peth is back in school this summer at Wright State University, keeping his mind sharp by taking biology-related courses and working on strengthening his body. He said it would be easy to stay home and give up, but instead has opted to strive ahead and continue his productive life.

Peth's girlfriend, Ashley Porter, said he is a remarkable person who is filled with a zest for life. That gusto is evident by his work ethic and caring thoughts for others.

This fall, he'll be teaching human anatomy and physiology at Wright State and hopes to continue with his Ph.D. program next summer.

Peth said he gets his courage and fortitude from his faith in Christianity. He hopes to persevere and eventually make a difference in other's lives by opening a research and rehabilitation facility to aid the wellness and lifespan of spinal cord injury victims.

His goal with the facility is to incorporate an all-encompassing arena of weight training, educational, nutritional and cardiovascular programs.

"I've just taken a bad situation and made the best of it and hope to eventually help other people," he added.

To register for the golf outing, make check payable to: Ashley Porter, (memo: Tony Peth Golf Tournament), PO Box 751574, Dayton, OH 45475-1574.

To make a donation to Peth's medical trust, send your check to: Harold Ayer Trust Account (memo: for Tony Peth), Suite 380, 3131 Camino Del Rio North, San Diego, CA, 92108.

For questions, call Porter at 885-0562 or Peth at 428-0474.