

# *Comp Laude® Award: Injured Worker*

## Seth Wannamaker

During work on an industrial site at the age of twenty-six, Seth fell approximately ten feet from the top of a ladder. The fall shattered his C6 vertebra, knocking him unconscious and leaving him with no feeling below the neck. Seth's innate sense of drive is inspiring. Waking to the news of the injury and the grim projection of only a 10% probability of regaining function only kick-started his defiance. "I just kept thinking, 'That can't be right,'" Seth says. "I refused to let that be right."

In August, the pursuit of intensive rehabilitation brought him to QLI. Seth's competitive drive became the cornerstone of his rehabilitation program and has garnered incredible results. Now a year post-injury, Seth lives independently, drives his own vehicle, and has become an active voice in the spinal cord injury community. In fact, his competitive drive has opened a new opportunity: the opportunity to inspire other injury survivors beyond disability.

In May, Seth joined QLI as a volunteer mentor for the organization's spinal cord injury rehabilitation services. There, he guides men, women, and families past the immediate fear and uncertainty of a traumatic injury, using his experience and independence to help them strike a fresh reserve of self-reliance. "I tell people not to worry about doubt," Seth says. "It's okay to have doubt. And it's okay to hear the doubts of others. The important thing is to prove all those doubts—even your own—wrong."

Seth was asked what advice he would give to injured workers entering the process, to which he replied, "Don't be afraid. Open up your mind and whatever opportunities come - just keep your mind open as much as possible. If you start closing doors, you're not going to be able to push forward."

