

Southwick resident making significant strides towards recovery

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SOUTHWICK – August 18, 2016 may be just another day to others, but this day also marks a two-year anniversary of an accident that changed someone's life.

Matthew LaBorgne, a resident of Southwick, suffered a traumatic brain injury as a result of a motorcycle accident on August 18, 2014. LaBorgne says he was riding his motorcycle in Chicopee when he lost control of the bike. That was the last thing he remembered from the accident. LaBorgne then proceeded to spend 15 days in a coma.

With the injury, LaBorgne has suffered short-term memory loss and bad eye sight. The ultimate difficulty of a traumatic brain injury is the fact that it is an invisible disability. Some people may not be able to completely see what LaBorgne has gone through in the past two years.

But, LaBorgne certainly has seen the strides he has made during his road to recovery. After spending months after the accident in a wheelchair, LaBorgne decided enough was enough and started on the path of trying to walk again.

The Southwick resident currently uses a cane to get around. It is a step that LaBorgne is fully determined towards. It may be a small step, but a step forward that is bringing him back to his active lifestyle.

Before the accident, LaBorgne loved to run, as he was an accomplished cross country runner in high school. He also has a passion for hockey and is focusing on getting back onto the ice at some point.



Matthew LeBorgne suffered a traumatic brain injury back in 2014 and is making great strides to recovery. (Photo by Greg Fitzpatrick)

Now walking with his cane, LaBorgne is making a positive progress with his family by his side; sort of.

"It's hard because my kids, my wife, everybody's 30 steps ahead of me," said LaBorgne.

His family may be several steps ahead of him when they are exercising, but when it comes to his road to recovery, LaBorgne's family is right there with him.

"That's what keeps me going, my family is great," said LaBorgne.

"My wife has stuck by me through thick and thin."

Besides using his cane to get around on a daily basis, LaBorgne is now using his cane to get into the driver's seat. He can drive his car on his own as he was able to retake the driver's license test.

LaBorgne put an interesting perspective on it as he mentioned how his 16-year-old daughter was taking her license test just around the time when he was. The last time LaBorgne took that test, was when he himself was 16 years old, back in 1993.

"That was a big step getting my license," said LaBorgne.

On September 10 in Cheshire, Mass, LaBorgne will be making several steps forward. The Annual 2016 Walk & Roll for Brain Injury will be taking place at the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail. An event that focuses on raising money for awareness of traumatic brain

injuries, it is a great way for people to come together and support one another.

LaBorgne, along with his wife Dawn and several others, will have their own team at the event called "Believe in Miracles."

One aspect of the event that might bring the most meaning to LaBorgne is the special connection that is formed with the people that will be around him that have also suffered through brain injuries.

"They're (brain injuries) all different, there's not one single one that's the same," said LaBorgne. "They've all been through everything I've been through."

As August 18, 2016 will mark that two-year anniversary of LaBorgne's accident, the anniversary doesn't represent what LaBorgne has gone through, as it gives LaBorgne a reminder of what is ahead.

His determination is set on the next two-year anniversary and the potential strides that he could be making at that point, because for him, he certainly "believes in miracles."

"Maybe I'll be running again."

