

September 24, 2010

Man returns to repay generosity of Berks people

Not a day goes by that Darrell Gwynn doesn't think about "The Game."

Nearly 20 years ago, as Gwynn was facing long recovery from a drag racing accident that cost him the use of his legs, an overflow crowd packed into FirstEnergy Stadium to watch a charity softball game to help pay for Gwynn's recovery.

It was one of those life-changing, and life-affirming, moments.

"I had no idea what was going to happen," Gwynn said. "It was just an overwhelming system that helped me get through those times. It was one of those things that will last forever."

Now, Gwynn is coming back to Berks County for a special 20th anniversary celebration of the charity softball game. This time, Gwynn is looking to give back to Berks.

Gwynn, founder of the Darrell Gwynn Foundation, plans to donate a wheelchair to someone in need as part of the celebration. The foundation is looking for a paralyzed county resident in need of a wheelchair, but who cannot afford to buy one.

Gwynn created the foundation to help paralyzed Americans pay for specialty wheelchairs and fund research that will find a cure for paralysis. Some specialty motorized wheelchairs can cost more than \$10,000 and those expenses are sometimes not covered by insurance, Gwynn said.

"We are trying to help people until a cure is found," the Florida man said.

Gwynn was paralyzed and lost an arm in an accident during an exhibition in London in 1990. Because he had no health insurance, friends in the racing community got together to help Gwynn pay his mounting medical bills.

"I had a wheelchair waiting for me," he said. "Those types of things do not fall out of the sky."

Prior to his crash, Gwynn excelled at Maple Grove Raceway, winning a number of events, including 18 Top Fuel national events in less than 10 seasons. During the racing season at Maple Grove, he lived in the community, making Berks his second home.

That is one of the reasons Gwynn said he wanted to return and help someone in need.

Jerry Gwynn, Darrell's father, said the outpouring of support shown in Berks 20 years ago touched him.

"I can't express what it meant to us," he said. "It is incredible that people still remember that night."



[View Daily News Photos](#)

Courtesy of Darrell Gwynn

The foundation of Darrell Gwynn, in front with his family behind him, will donate a wheelchair to a person who needs one but cannot afford it, to celebrate the 20th anniversary of a charity softball game that benefited him after he was partially paralyzed in a drag racing accident.