

# Georgia's lead agency working to enhance the lives of Georgians with traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries.\*

*Supporting lives of meaning, independence and inclusion.*



**Georgia's Brain & Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission Administrators:**

*The State Action Plan*

- Molds the state infrastructure
- Aids in the development of services to improve lives
  - > Screening & Identification
  - > Training & Awareness
  - > Rehabilitation & Wellness
  - > Service Coordination
  - > Lifelong Supports
  - > Independent & Integrated Living
  - > Community Participation

*The Central Registry*

- Identifies newly injured individuals
- Enables outreach and education
- Valuable data to gauge needs, gaps and trends

<b>\$509 mil</b>	<b>12.6%</b>
Lifetime medical expenses for Georgians with traumatic spinal cord injury in 2016	Percentage of Georgians still employed one year after injury

**INJURIES IN 2016**  
**27,840**

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Average lifetime cost of care for severe TBI and SCI  
**\$2-4 million**



As medical treatment, safety and trauma care advance, more people survive brain and spinal cord injuries than ever before, but then face a lifetime of physical, behavioral and cognitive impairments.



**THE TRUST FUND**

**\$23 million** in grant awards to Georgians

Fostering lives of **MEANING, INDEPENDENCE AND INCLUSION**

Supports **POST-ACUTE CARE** and **REHABILITATION**

*Funded solely by DUI and reckless driving fine surcharges*

**\$10k individual lifetime cap** (\$15k for modified vans)

**2010-2016 DUI convictions fell directly impacting grant funding.**

**41k** → **24k**



2008 Monthly Grant Budget  
**\$165,000**

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2016 Monthly Grant Budget  
**\$85,000**

*As the legislative and healthcare landscapes continue to shift, the role of the Commission has become more valuable than ever before.*

\*Estimated; cost of injury, lost wages extrapolated from CDC and SCIMS injury cost data.

# A SURVIVOR'S STORY: LaQuan Taylor

On January 14, 2015 LaQuan Taylor left work and headed to meet up with friends for a weekly bible study. At 27 years old, he had graduated Valedictorian of his high school class and proudly served two successful tours of duty in the Middle East in the U.S. Navy. LaQuan was enrolled at Georgia State University working to re-engineer his diesel mechanic skills learned in the Navy into a dynamic IT career. It wasn't long before he landed his dream job and finally bought the Camaro he had always dreamed to drive.

That evening LaQuan made a last moment decision to pull into a nearby shopping center to withdraw money for his car payment. As he walked back to his car, two armed men approached him and demanded his wallet and keys. LaQuan quickly complied. They told him to walk away and when he did they shot LaQuan 4 times in the back. As he fell to the ground, they shot him 11 more times. A nurse ran to his aid to try to minimize the bleeding until the EMTs arrived. And then it all went black. No one was sure in that moment if LaQuan Taylor would see the light of day again.

LaQuan spent the next two months in ICU. The bullets did serious damage. His ribs were shattered. He lost a kidney and half of his liver and intestines. He was diagnosed with an incomplete T12 vertebra thoracic spinal cord injury and was told he may never walk again. Months later, LaQuan left the hospital with a shattered body completely confined to a wheelchair.

Unfortunately it wasn't just his body that was shattered. LaQuan's entire life began to implode. Because he was so new to his job, none of his benefits had gone into effect. Medical bills became insurmountable. He couldn't work; hence, he lost his job. Because he was unemployed, he couldn't pay his bills. His credit score crashed. Relationships fell apart under the stress of it all. It was so hard to comprehend how a life full of so many blessings could so quickly be destroyed.

But LaQuan did not give up. He was determined to rebuild it all. He began his initial rehabilitation locally, until he was strong enough to travel to Tampa where he was offered specialized treatment at the VA hospital's spinal cord unit. LaQuan still makes regular trips to the Tampa VA hospital to seize every opportunity he can to strengthen himself and reclaim his life.

Along his journey, LaQuan has had time to reflect on the dramatic turn his life took. Though he was a victim of a random act of violence, he never latched on to the victim mentality. He isn't angry and doesn't dwell on "why me?" Instead he feels in some odd way that this was his calling.

He shares, "That day they took my car, but they gave me life. This has put everything in perspective. I was made for this. It was meant for this to happen to me. I don't yet know what the purpose of it is, but my steps were ordered. I am strong enough to handle this."

LaQuan's faith and determination have paid off. In November he took his first steps and is now able to walk with the support of a walker. He has returned to school and is working to earn a website design and development certificate, with the dream of starting his own business. And thanks to a grant from the Trust Fund, he bought a modified car that will allow him to drive again.

LaQuan Taylor takes one day at a time and gives each his all. With a big smile and a grateful heart he says, "Some things may be out of my limits now, but there are still so many things that aren't. I intend to live my life to the fullest!"

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