



So close to his western dream, N.S. man left paralyzed by crash

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A Cape Breton man's journey out west for work took a tragic turn last week, leaving him paralyzed and his hometown rallying behind him.

Jay Cousins had been on the road more than four days, on his way to begin a new job in Red Deer, Alta., when he was involved in a single-vehicle accident.

"He started to swerve, and I imagine when you fall asleep and your foot's on the pedal, it probably increases, and it started to roll and it threw him through the passenger side window," said family friend Laurie Carrigan.

The 35-year-old New Waterford man was thrown about 50 feet through the air, Carrigan said, leaving both his feet broken and him paralyzed from the chest down.

Cousin's aunt Lynn Meery recalls getting the news from her sister-in-law early on the morning of July 7, shortly after the accident.

"I ran over and she had her head in the sink because she was washing her hair at the time and she was trying to tell me Jay was in an accident. And she was just saying that God couldn't take another one," Meery said.

The Cousins family lost their daughter last February due to an illness, Meery said.

"I just prayed with her and I got people to pray. I got on the phone and called everyone I could think of."

The community immediately came together to help, with friends setting up a [GoFundMe campaign](#) to help the family financially.

Within days it has raised more than \$13,000.

Carrigan said she is also setting up a trust fund at the Royal Bank.

With more still to be learned about Cousins' conditions, the family is looking at least three to four months before he can be moved from hospital in Regina back to Nova Scotia, she said.

When the time comes, it will cost more than \$52,000 to airlift Cousins along with a medical team back to the Maritimes.

"It looks like it's going to be a long, long road. A long road. But I hope we're all prepared to help them through," Meery said.

Now, the family says Cousins is awake and aware of what's happening. He will need another surgery in six weeks to help with his neck pain.

With files from CTV Atlantic's Kyle Moore



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