

# Three Inspiring Paralysis Survivors Awarded Lifetime Grants

*In the US, 17,000 annual spinal cord injury survivors face \$500K+ in first-year costs. The Socrates Award offers lifetime grants to those with paralysis.*

CHICAGO, IL, UNITED STATES, February 18, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Brennan



Life is full of incredible highs and frustrating lows," says Brennan. "The daily pursuit of 'a healthy mind' and 'a healthy body' in the face of adversity is the true testament of one's character."

*Chris Brennan*

Rehabilitation Foundation has selected three recipients for this year's Socrates Award, a lifetime grant providing economic support for therapy, equipment, prescriptions, and in-home care for individuals with paralysis. The award comes at a critical time, as spinal cord injury survivors face medical expenses exceeding \$500,000 in their first year alone.

Each recipient has demonstrated remarkable resilience in their recovery journey:

Michael Lopez, suffered a life-changing spinal cord injury in a diving accident that left him with quadriplegia, resulting

in no use of his legs and limited use of his arms. After months of treatment in medical and rehabilitation facilities in Virginia and Colorado, Lopez is returning home to Albuquerque. A graduate of Albuquerque Academy and Colorado College, he remains hopeful about returning to a productive life in his community with support from family and friends.

Jared Dickman survived a critical car accident that led to his hospitalization in the ICU at Mercy Health Hospital in Rockford. His experience reflects a broader pattern, as car accidents remain the leading cause of spinal cord injuries for people under 65, with approximately 250,000 individuals experiencing paralysis from vehicle accidents annually. Despite his injuries, Dickman maintains his commitment to recovery and physical therapy as he works toward regaining independence.

Sydni Mell, a southern Wisconsin dairy farm native, suffered paralysis from the waist down after a fall while working on her family farm. Her injury highlights the risks faced by young agricultural workers, with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health reporting 12,000 youth farm injuries in 2014 alone. Following a lengthy ICU stay and five-hour back surgery, Mell has persevered through rehabilitation to continue her education. Now using a wheelchair, she credits her support system and the agricultural community for inspiring her recovery. She is set

to graduate this spring from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with a degree in dairy science.

The Socrates Award, established in 2018, evolved from its original purpose of honoring collegiate athletes' academic and athletic achievements. The award's name draws from the Latin phrase "mens sana in corpore sano" ("Healthy Mind in a Healthy Body"), which took on a deeper significance for Foundation Chairman Christopher Brennan after his own spinal cord injury.

"Life itself is full of incredible highs and frustrating lows," says Brennan. "The daily pursuit of 'a healthy mind' and 'a healthy body' in the face of adversity is the true testament of one's character."

Each recipient will receive a \$1,000 grant, with the Foundation working to increase this amount through future fundraising efforts. The honorees will be recognized at the Annual Board and Advisory Board meeting in March 2025.

#### About the Brennan Rehabilitation Foundation

Based in Lake Forest, Illinois, the Brennan Rehabilitation Foundation is a 501c3 charitable organization dedicated to supporting individuals with cervical spinal injuries and their families. The Foundation provides financial resources to ensure continuous rehabilitation support and help patients achieve optimal health and independence. For information about donations and fundraising events, visit [www.brennanrehabfoundation.org](http://www.brennanrehabfoundation.org).

K.C. OROURKE

KCLO Communications, LLC

+1 816-718-5380

[email us here](#)

---

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/786894680>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2025 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.