



Dear Friends,

Nothing in life prepares you for the day you hear your child will never walk again.

Our son, Greg, was paralyzed after suffering a spinal cord injury in a car accident. He had just started college and his whole life was ahead of him. My husband, Mike, and I were so grateful he survived, but, nonetheless, were heartbroken when his doctors told us Greg would live the rest of his life in a wheelchair.

After Greg's injury, Mike and I were determined to take positive, productive action. We became actively involved in the American Paralysis Association (APA), the predecessor to the Reeve Foundation. The APA was comprised of a group of families like ours who were surprised by the lack of activity and interest on the part of the medical community in spinal cord injury research. We began to search for and fund scientists willing to conduct research in this area.

When Christopher Reeve was injured in 1995, he and Dana turned to the APA seeking answers to the multitude of questions every family has after a loved one is injured. We were encouraged when this wonderful couple joined with our mission through a merger of their Foundation with the APA. This united the paralysis community, allowed us to pool resources, and fostered collaboration amongst scientists and researchers which accelerated new discoveries.

Christopher's celebrity brought widespread attention and interest to the condition of those living with paralysis. My husband, Mike, contributed a great deal of his resources, time and business acumen to create a strategic plan for the future. Over the last three decades, thanks to Mike, Christopher and Dana, and especially the compassion and generosity of you, our donors, a genuine movement has begun. This field, which was once considered the "graveyard of neurobiology," is now poised to provide some of the most monumental medical discoveries of all time!

Promising progress has been steadily occurring. Five years ago, a two year-old toddler, Chase Ford, accidentally fell from his sofa and sustained a spinal cord injury that left him paralyzed and ventilator-dependent just like Christopher Reeve was. Of course, his parents were utterly devastated when doctors predicted their little boy would likely never walk again.

The Ford family turned to the Reeve Foundation for hope, and thanks to our cutting-edge research program, the outcome for this little boy was a remarkable recovery! After undergoing Locomotor Training at one of the Reeve Foundation's NeuroRecovery Network (NRN) facilities, where Chase was suspended over a treadmill while specialized, Reeve-trained therapists moved his little legs to simulate walking, he is no longer paralyzed, and today, Chase can breathe and walk on his own!

Though you and I may not be acquainted, we have in common a commitment to help those living with a spinal cord injury to someday walk again. I would like to personally thank you for your compassion and support over the years, and let you know you are a vital part of the Reeve Foundation family and can proudly share in all of our achievements.

Together, through our mutual longtime support of the Foundation, gratifying outcomes like Chase's are becoming more common, and we have good reason to be optimistic about the incredible breakthroughs the next 20, 30, even 50 years will bring. In fact, right now there are various drugs being tested in clinical trials and in the research pipeline, and promising new developments are on the horizon that may revolutionize how spinal cord injury patients are treated and may help to speed their recovery. We have seen tremendous advancements over the last 30 years, and the outlook for the future is even more encouraging.

This is why I am reaching out to you now in the hopes that by joining the Michael A. Hughes Planned Giving Society of the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation today, your lifelong generosity will become a legacy that continues to bring benefits to many generations to come. Your estate gift will help to ensure that the most innovative and promising research will continue to be funded in the future until the day finally comes when no parent will ever again have to hear the devastating, life-altering words "your child will never walk again."

My husband passed away in 2007 but his contributions to the cause are timeless and everlasting – of this we are very proud. Our family was moved and honored when the Reeve Foundation announced the formation of the Michael A. Hughes Planned Giving Society. What a wonderful way to memorialize Mike, and all those special donors who include the Reeve Foundation in their financial plans.

I know estate planning is very personal and can be difficult to think about. I also completely understand the desire to provide for loved ones, and that contemplating an estate gift to the Reeve Foundation requires careful consideration.

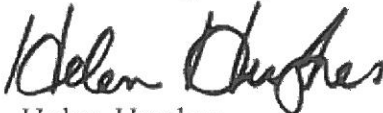
Making a simple beneficiary designation in one's will or trust, bank or retirement account, or life insurance policy is easy to do, and can be revoked if one's situation changes. In some circumstances, a charitable bequest would actually increase the assets loved ones ultimately receive.

There are many ways to include the Reeve Foundation in your estate plans, and our website describes just a few. Our Planned Giving Team can be reached at 800-225-0292 for more information and would be happy to work with you and/or your advisors to structure a gift, regardless of size, that meets all of your philanthropic and financial planning goals.

Each of our esteemed donors will receive a Certificate of Membership in the Michael A. Hughes Planned Giving Society suitable for framing, and, with your permission, will be gratefully acknowledged on the Foundation's website, as well as in print and other collateral materials.

Please accept my heartfelt gratitude for taking the time to consider including the Reeve Foundation in your financial plans. Whether or not you decide to join the Michael A. Hughes Planned Giving Society, please know the entire Board and staff of the Reeve Foundation and the paralysis community we serve deeply values your continued friendship, loyalty and support.

Warmest regards,


Helen Hughes