

## MEDIA RELEASE

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\* *For immediate release*

### **Students fundraise for new wheelchair!**

Today, Floreat Park Primary will be hosting a fundraising day to raise money to buy quadriplegic, Mark Powdrill, a new wheelchair.

Mark was just 20 years old when a decision to dive into the Swan River changed his life forever. Mark hit a sandbank and broke his spinal cord- he has been a quadriplegic ever since.

Now, nearly 20 years later Mark works for not-for-profit organisation, the Paraplegic Benefit Fund (PBF). He presents as part of the **PBFPREVENTION**-aqua program, speaking to year six and seven students about his accident and urging them to take water safety seriously.

During a presentation at Floreat Park Primary the children noticed Mark's uncomfortable posture, which he explained was due to his wheelchair.

The students were so inspired by Mark they decided to raise some money to buy him a new and improved wheelchair. Mark's 'dream' wheelchair will be adjustable, light weight and will greatly improve Mark's mobility. This wheelchair will cost between \$6000 and \$7000.

"Chair power for Powdrill" Day involves the entire student body participating in various activities to give them a sense on how it would feel to be disabled. The activities will include a crutches race, wheelchair race and blindfolded adventure course.

**The activities will take place between 12:45pm and 3:15pm on today.**

There will be a whole school talk given by Mark prior to the start of the activities.

"It is a very generous initiative from the students at Floreat Park Primary, which will have a really positive impact on Mark's quality of life," PBF spokesperson, Hazel Hodgkins says.

"Mark has been a wonderful presenter for the **PBFPREVENTION**-aqua program and really enjoys the opportunity to share his story and encourage young people to take water safety seriously," Ms Hodgkins says.

"Through fundraising and participating in activities that deny them the use of all their limbs and senses, the children are learning the values of empathy and compassion," Floreat Park Primary Deputy Principal Rod Cohen says.

"They can be proud of the fact that they are helping Mark in his quest to reach their peers with the aquatic safety message," Mr. Cohen says.  
PBF is a national charity which aims to prevent permanent spinal cord injury and enhance the lives of these already having suffered the injury. PBF runs a number of

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community based awareness programs in the workplace, schools (road safety) and in aquatic environments.

PBF is funded through membership. All members pay a small annual fee to be eligible to claim the \$100,000 member benefit if they are to sustain a permanent spinal cord injury.

For more information on PBF please visit [www.pbf.asn.au](http://www.pbf.asn.au) or call 1800 809 780

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