

Ontario's spinal cord injury community ready to Roll Through Barriers in July

June 30, 2020 Spinal Cord Injury Ontario (SCIO) celebrates its 75th year of supporting Ontarians with spinal cord injury by launching *Rolling Through Barriers Month* to raise awareness and funds for accessibility programs and services.

July 2020 will see SCIO community members – people with spinal cord injury (SCI), their family members, volunteers, corporate and government partners, and anyone who believes in increased accessibility and equity in this province – participate in competitive 'demolition' teams to identify a personal barrier, then roll right through it.

"*Rolling Through Barriers* is a creative way to bring our community together online while looking at the very serious issue of accessibility barriers in this province," says SCIO CEO Dr. Stuart Howe. "Like other charities, we've had to cancel planned fundraising and awareness events these past few months, so we thought a perfect alternative during lockdown would be a virtual competitive event that gets people across the province thinking about accessibility and breaking down barriers. My young sons are putting plans together and we hope people of all ages are excited."

Nancy Xia sustained a spinal cord injury in 2003 and is proud to be a Rolling Through Barriers champion. "It's been a long road back to a full and active life," says Nancy. "The barriers I still face tend to be in areas of common daily living - or what should be common, like getting in and out of a pool. It's easy for most people but for many of us, the simple joy of swimming becomes a hardship when there's no pool lift available. They're not super expensive but would make public pools a lot more inclusive. That's a barrier I want to roll right through!"

The first step to get involved is to register online at sciontario.org as an individual or a team demolition project. Then creativity kicks in as participants choose something to represent a barrier and capture rolling through it with a photo or video, which is shared on social media to inspire likes, shares and donations. The top 10 videos will be chosen to be part of an online SCIO Rolling Through Barriers Variety Show on July 30 at 1:00 pm. Prizes will be awarded for top fundraisers and most liked video/photo posts.

Available for interviews: Dr. Stuart Howe; Nancy Xia; other subject matter experts

Contact: Zina Atkinson, zina.atkinson@sciontario.org, 416-422-5644, ext. 228