

Who doesn't enjoy a relaxing drive in the country on a beautiful, sunny day? Windows down... breeze blowing. Have you ever thought for one second that something as seemingly harmless as a receipt blowing in your face could alter the course of your life forever? That's exactly what happened to Hannah.

On May 20, 2013, Hannah was driving down a country road on her way to a friend's house. It was a warm day and the air conditioning in her car was broken so she had rolled her windows down to keep cool. A receipt from her back seat became suspended in the breeze and swirled around the car before starting Hannah by landing directly on her face.



As she reached up to brush the receipt away her car veered off the road striking a mailbox. As she regained control of the car she glanced back over her shoulder to see what she had hit. This reaction caused her to cross the centerline of the road and head straight towards the opposite ditch. In a panic, she over-corrected and lost control of the vehicle. Before she knew it, Hannah blacked out as the car was flipping over multiple times before coming to rest in a field. When she regained consciousness, Hannah realized that she could not move her legs and had no feeling from her waist down.

Hannah's initial MRI just prior to surgery showed that she had suffered a complete spinal cord separation. Three weeks later, Hannah was tested and downgraded to a Level B incomplete spinal cord separation (T11-T12) in her lower back on the ASIA Impairment Scale. The only feeling that Hannah had below her waist was an intense burning and stinging sensation in her feet, thought to be from significant nerve damage sustained in the accident.

Hannah and her family were devastated when they learned the severity of the injury. Doctors told her that she only had a 0.1% chance of ever walking again. Hannah was determined to prove them wrong. After being released from the hospital, Hannah spent over a year in physical therapy working towards being able to stand and take steps with leg braces. Before long, Hannah's insurance wanted her discharged from therapy as it was felt she had reached her greatest level of attainable function. She wasn't making enough noticeable gains. Therapists believed that Hannah was ready to live her life independently... in a wheelchair.

Hannah would not accept this limiting outlook for her future. Despite the fact that she was not yet walking, Hannah believed there was still considerable room for increased functionality and independence. Thankfully, Hannah and her family discovered Sara's Garden. They learned how Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy and Conductive Education have been extremely successful in treating people who suffered from serious accidents and injuries, in many cases improving the client's fine and gross motor skills and physical healing.

Midway through Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy treatments, Hannah started noticing feeling returning in her lower back and bladder. She also began experiencing significant relief from the burning nerve pain in her feet. She started having better results in her physical therapy sessions. Her therapists noted that she was using her legs more and was recording faster times in her exercises.

Immediately following HBOT, Hannah was evaluated for Conductive Education services. The conductors felt that Hannah could benefit from CE services, despite the fact that Conductive Education was not a widely accepted treatment modality for people with spinal cord injuries. Having just completed over 19 months in physical therapy, Hannah was skeptical about what CE would really be able to do for her, but she was encouraged by this new opportunity for increased independence.

Hannah began Conductive Education at Sara's Garden on May 12, 2015, nearly two full years after her accident. It only took one week of Conductive Education to convince Hannah that this was what she had been looking for. Instead of spending her time working on accepting her fate and living independently in a wheelchair, Hannah felt challenged to push further by people who believed she could continue to progress beyond life in a wheelchair.

Hannah received Conductive Education 3-5 times per week for five months. At the time of her initial CE evaluation, Hannah was not able to maintain a free sitting position, achieve or maintain a standing position, or walk without Knee-Ankle-Foot Orthoses (KAFOs) and maximum physical help. Through Conductive Education, Hannah's leg strength has improved dramatically. She is now able to achieve and maintain a free sitting and standing position wearing only Ankle-Foot Orthoses (AFOs) and is currently working on walking with canes. When Hannah visits with her previous therapists they are shocked and amazed at how far she has come in only five months.

Generations ago, many people living with such severe paralysis may have been confined to wheelchairs or institutions, unable to perform even the simplest daily tasks like driving a car or getting dressed. Today, however, it is clear that people living with paralysis can live even more healthy, productive, and independent lives than was ever thought possible.

Thanks to Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy and Conductive Education services at Sara's Garden, Hannah now has more hope than ever before. Hope for a better quality of life. Hope for more independence and a better future. Like Hannah, no matter what you've been told, there is hope... and Sara's Garden can help you find it.



### HOPE. HELP. HEALING.

Autism Intervention • Conductive Education  
Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy • Occupational Therapy  
Sensory Integration • Speech-Language Pathology

## Sara's Garden

419.335.SARA • [www.sarasgarden.org](http://www.sarasgarden.org)  
620 West Leggett Street • Wauseon, OH 43567

