

The P-A Blundell Legacy Fund

: spinal
: research

spinal-research.org/p-a



Hi there

You have done something amazing today in choosing to fundraise for Spinal Research via the P-A Blundell Legacy Fund.

The P-A Blundell Legacy Fund for Spinal Research was created to continue the remarkable legacy of Paul-André Blundell (P-A).

The fund will uphold the tireless work of Rob and Gerri Blundell, P-A's devoted parents and the founders of Trust P-A Charity.

In this guide you'll find everything you need to get started on your fundraising journey. If you'd like to chat through your ideas, please do reach out using the contact details below.

Together, we will cure paralysis.

**Rob, Gerri
and all at Spinal Research**

email: community@spinal-research.org
phone: 0203 824 7400



About Spinal Research

Every two hours, someone in the UK will become paralysed. Globally, it is estimated that 15.4 million people are living with paralysis. It can happen to anyone at any time, changing lives instantly.

When the spinal cord is injured it affects far more than the ability to walk. Paralysis impacts movement, sensation, continence, breathing, and much more.

At Spinal Research our vision is to create a world where paralysis can be cured, no matter when the injury occurred.

With your support this will be achieved by funding the most innovative and promising research globally, empowering the next generation of Spinal Research scientists, and pushing the boundaries of science to find a cure.

Today, function-restoring treatments are in human trials, offering real hope that curing paralysis could become the medical breakthrough of the 21st century.

The science is here and progressing rapidly, but what is needed now is the funding to accelerate this groundbreaking research for the millions affected by paralysis in the UK and across the globe.





Every 2 hours someone is paralysed by a spinal cord injury in the UK.



105,000

people currently living with a SCI in the UK.



15.4m

people currently living with a SCI globally.



12

injuries occur every day in the UK.

We exist to **cure paralysis**



50+

50+ PhD students funded. Many now running research labs.



120

120 of the world's leading researchers attended our Network Meeting.



£2.2m

Over 2.2 million pounds invested in research over the last few years.

About Paul-Andre

Paul-André Blundell, affectionately known as P-A was born and raised in Whitchurch, Cardiff.

P-A demonstrated a remarkable talent for sports from an early age. He attended Ysgol Melin Gruffydd along with lifelong friends Matthew Rhys and Ioan Gruffudd and Llandaff Cathedral School, where he captained the Colts Rugby Team. P-A later attended Old Swinford Hospital in Stourbridge, excelling in athletics, rugby, running, and golf, and winning Victor Ludorum multiple times. He represented his school in rugby and cricket internationally and was a member of the Welsh Youth U19's squad.

At the University of Wales College Cardiff (UWIC), P-A was recognized for his boxing talent, winning The Most Promising Newcomer Trophy. After a shoulder injury, he switched to touch rugby and played on the winning British Champions Touch Rugby side. Post-graduation, P-A moved to Bath, becoming a successful Community Specialist with Pharmacia (now Pfizer). He joined Keynsham RFC and contributed significantly as a player and coach. P-A also ventured into motorsport, racing with the Bristol Car Club and 750 Motor Club.

In September 2001, P-A suffered a severe neck injury during a rugby match, resulting in complete paralysis from the chin down. Tragically, after making good progress in the spinal rehab unit, five and a half months later he died suddenly and unexpectedly from a blood clot, (pulmonary embolism) aged just 26 years old.

P-A's courage and optimism post-injury were inspirational. He had accepted the challenge to progress positively and make the best of his life and new paralysed circumstances. Learning about the current scientific progress inspired him to want to be involved in future Clinical Trials to repair paralysis. His motivation was to tour the UK and lecture on spinal cord injury its implications and to share the latest scientific progress and clinical developments.

Rob and Gerri, P-A's devoted parents, continued his legacy by founding Trust PA, a charity dedicated to funding research to end paralysis and over the years have raised over £500,000 to support Spinal Research.





Together, we will cure paralysis.

A message from Louisa McGinn, CEO of Spinal Research.

“Rob and Geri are a truly remarkable couple who have taken the worst tragedy that a parent can face and, in their son’s memory, worked tirelessly over the last 23 years to try and make a difference for others.

“Their love and devotion for Paul-Andre, each other and their other son Steve, is inspirational and we are honoured to take their work forward through this new Legacy Fund in P-A’s name.”

Your support matters

How will the P-A Blundell Legacy Fund make a difference?

Donations to P-A's fund will benefit a PhD studentship such as the one being mentored by Dr Philippa Warren at King's College London. Dr Warren leads a team working to restore respiratory function in SCI patients.

Spinal Research is proud to fund two studentships every year creating the experts of the future. These three-year awards encourage the development of talented and highly motivated young scientists in the field of spinal cord repair, in both clinical and basic science research environments. Many of our former PhD students are now running their own world-class labs.

Dr Philippa Warren is herself a graduate of a Spinal Research Studentship Award and is dedicated to the specialism of respiratory function after spinal cord injury. Pip tells us about the research that the studentship will be focussed on.

"One of the fundamental problems in trying to restore activity after a spinal cord injury is time. Rapidly after the trauma, nerve cells in the spinal cord die, connections to enable muscles to move are lost, and a scar forms in the cord preventing new growth. Many experimental treatments have been shown to have some success at recovering function if they are applied in the immediate days after an injury but fail when applied months-to-years afterwards. This is a problem because the majority of patients with a spinal cord injury acquired it months-to-years previously and need treatments which succeed in this hostile environment.

Incredibly, our previous work in experimental models has shown that breathing can be restored months-to[1]years after an injury, but not in the initial days after a trauma, through a treatment that changes the environment of the spinal cord from one that stops growth, to one that promotes it. Interestingly, this recovery of function occurred within 1-2 weeks following treatment application, a rapid time course that suggests that the responsible system controlling activity was already primed for recovery. We are going to determine the factors at the circuit and cellular level that enable rapid recovery to occur in this system at these long time points after injury. We will use this data to determine the means and mechanisms through which we can restore function in the months-to-years after an injury, helping to identify new treatment targets."



How you can support the fund

Make a donation

You can donate to P-A's fund in a few easy steps. Simply, scan the QR code or visit the weblink on the right.

If you'd prefer to donate by phone you can call us on 0203 824 7400 Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

Or you can post a cheque made payable to Spinal Research to: Spinal Research, 201 Borough High Street, London, SE1 1JA.



spinal-research.org/p-a

Donate your birthday

Make your next birthday count and collect donations in lieu of presents and cards.

The easiest way to do this is to set up a Facebook fundraiser. You can scan this code to get started.

If you prefer you can also collect donations in person and then send them to us.



Fundraise

If you'd like to fundraise to raise money for P-A's fund then we are here to help and support you throughout your fundraising journey, no matter what you decide to do.

Whether you choose to organise a bake sale, participate in a race, take on a personal challenge or host a card night, every penny you raise will add to P-A's fund and bring us closer to our goal of curing paralysis.

You can download a full [fundraising pack here](#) or email community@spinal-research.org for more information and ideas.

Stay in touch

However you support The P-A Blundell Legacy Fund we hope you will stay in touch before, during, and after your fundraising. Contact us in one of the following ways:

Email us: community@spinal-research.org

Phone us: 0203 824 7400

Our website: spinal-research.org

Write to us: Spinal Research, 201 Borough High Street,
London, SE1 1JA

Follow us on social media

Please follow us on our social platforms to stay up to date with our latest news and developments. Don't forget to tag us in any posts relating to your fundraising.



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A very special thank you

“After more than 21 years raising money in memory of P-A to fund groundbreaking research into finding a cure for paralysis, we are excited to announce a significant milestone in our journey.

We have decided to formally join forces with Spinal Research, the UK’s leading medical research charity focused on curing spinal cord injury.

Established in 1981, at a time when there was no more than a handful of scientists working on what was considered the impossible challenge of repairing the spinal cord, Spinal Research has had a key role in catalysing the global field through scientific funding, capacity building, fostering collaborations and patient advocacy. Spinal Research are setting up a fund in P-A’s name that will support our incredible shared mission of bringing a cure to people with a spinal cord injury.

We hope you will continue to support this research, and keep P-A’s dream of finding a cure alive.”

Rob and Gerri Blundell