

You may recognise Jamie Astwood, I've told you her story before and her beautiful picture is splashed across our website – young, vibrant, confident, and gracious.

Jamie turned 19 in January, and her eyes are bright with the endless possibilities her future may hold.



**Ambassador  
Jamie Astwood**

### **That wasn't so on 19 January 2013.**

Jamie's T4 spinal cord break happened when she was boogie boarding down some sand dunes while on holiday with her family in Northland. A typical bit of summertime fun, something I have done before – you possibly have too? I don't think of it as particularly dangerous or high-risk.

On her last run down, Jamie hit a patch of grass at the bottom of the dunes and was knocked off her board. She describes it as a "freak accident" – something that could happen to anyone.

She had broken her spinal cord in several places, injuries which paralysed her from the waist down – she is classed as a T4 paraplegic.

"I just remember saying "I don't feel my legs", and the next thing I remember is being in Whangarei Hospital," recalls Jamie.

After being airlifted to Starship Hospital, where she spent three weeks, including celebrating her 11th birthday, she was transferred to the Wilson Centre in Auckland, a rehabilitation centre for children.

It has taken Jamie a while to become independent in her chair, progress is incremental, and it has taken years longer to become fully independent. But the psychological recovery came more easily.

"It was almost a bonus that it happened at that age, as I could just get on with it," she explains. "I adapted quite quickly by focusing on making the most of my existing situation, which I can't change."

Jamie credits much of that to her strong support network - she has an **incredible** family who I have had the privilege to meet and spend time with on a number of occasions.

Despite everything she has been through, Jamie's eyes are bright with the endless possibilities her future holds. She is confident that future will include her walking again one day soon.

"I don't wake up with any regrets, and I don't let my situation control how I live my life. But if there was a cure it would be life-changing."

CatWalk's vision is a world free from spinal cord injury paralysis and Jamie's situation can change. The research that is happening right now demonstrates that.

This is where you and I come in. Every donation made to The CatWalk Trust goes towards funding world-leading research into a cure for spinal cord injury paralysis, both in New Zealand and internationally.

Like recovery, research is about incremental progress: the only way to find a cure is if research continues. To do that, I'm asking for your help.

It's crucial that progress is not stalled by lack of funding. **Would you consider donating today? Any amount that means something to you will mean something to spinal cord injury research.**

We could be live in a world free from spinal cord injury paralysis, just imagine that day in the not too distant future.

Thank you for your support.



**Meg Speirs**  
General Manager

