

# Dr. Bradford Berk to receive Courage Award

**Chris Swingle** • Staff writer • September 1, 2010

**Photo gallery:** Check out the rest of the photo gallery [here](#).

Dr. Bradford Berk — who is riding a recumbent tricycle about a year after suffering a serious spinal cord injury in a bike accident — will receive the inaugural Courage Award Sept. 18 at an annual Courage Bowl football game to benefit Camp Good Days and Special Times.

The chief executive of University of Rochester Medical Center was paralyzed for a couple of months after flying over his bike handlebars May 30, 2009, to avoid colliding with a car on a hill near Canandaigua Lake. After extensive rehab therapy, he returned to work fulltime in a motorized wheelchair March 1.

This summer, Berk is enjoying riding a slightly adapted, 21-speed tricycle. "It's great fun," he said Tuesday. "It's good to feel the wind in your hair."

He praised the Rochester Rehabilitation Center's SportsNet program, which has adaptive sports equipment. Berk still can't walk very well, has limited hand and arm movement and lacks normal sensation below the shoulders.

Of cycling joy, he said: "It's just the whole sense of your own motion, your own pedaling." A three-inch cloth belt keeps him from falling off the seat.

"Everybody really just looked at Dr. Berk's story and that horrible bike accident he had and how it changed his life and how he never gave up," said Gary Mervis, chairman and founder of Camp Good Days, explaining the selection of Berk.

Mervis, an assistant football coach at St. John Fisher College, six years ago prompted turning the annual match between Fisher and the University of Rochester into the Courage Bowl. Six boys from Camp Good Days serve as honorary coaches and

four girls as honorary cheerleaders.

This year, the Courage Bowl moves to a larger, neutral venue — Marina Auto Stadium, where the Rhinos soccer team plays. For the first time, the Bowl's ticket money will go to Camp Good Days, which serves children and adults touched by cancer or other life challenges.

"There's a lot of courage there every day," said Berk, adding that he's humbled by the award.

The Courage Bowl will be carried live on Time Warner Sports Network (cable channel 26), WYSL radio (1040 AM/92.1 FM) and SportsRadio 950 ESPN.

Halftime will include an attempt to win back the world record for largest kazoo ensemble.

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### If you go

**What:** Courage Bowl between the St. John Fisher Cardinals and the University of Rochester Yellowjackets.

**When:** Courage Award will be just before the 7 p.m. kickoff Sept. 18. Gates open at 5 p.m.

**Where:** Marina Auto Stadium, 460 Oak St.

**Tickets:** Requested donation \$7, \$5 youths/students, \$20 for a family four-pack, \$15 premium seat. Tickets available at Ticketmaster, [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com), and the box office at the stadium. Bulk ticket packages are available from the camp, (585) 624-5555.

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