

## **Edmonton school children hear how international motivational speaker, Mark Pollock, learned to walk again**

- WHAT:** Media are invited to attend a brilliant speaking engagement by Mark Pollock. Mark Pollock will be available for interviews following the presentation.
- WHEN:** **Thursday, December 7, 2017, at 10:15 a.m.**
- WHERE:** Northlands Expo Centre- Hall D, 7515-118 Ave NW, Edmonton, AB
- WHY:** TELUS World of Science - Edmonton's *Brightest Minds* program presents a very special program for Edmonton school's – free of charge – giving students a glimpse into the incredible life of Mark Pollock, the world of high performance exploration and cutting-edge rehab medicine.
- WHO:** Mark Pollock, an adventure athlete, an author and a broadcaster, talks about how he has maintained an active lifestyle despite being blind and living with paralysis.
- Dr. Jaynie Yang PT, PhD, Professor & Interim Chair of the Department of Physical Therapy, Neuroscience & Mental Health Institute at the University of Alberta will discuss the remarkable breakthroughs in spinal cord injury science, specifically the ReWalk Exoskeleton.
- Donna Livingstone, physical therapist with more than 15 years of clinical experience, has been training people with spinal cord injuries to walk using an exoskeleton for the last 4 years
- VISUALS:** More than 1,300 students will attend this inspiring and educational presentation.
- Michael Reimer, with the guidance of Dr. Yang and Livingstone will demonstrate how Reimer can walk using the ReWalk Exoskeleton.

## **BIOGRAPHIES:**

### **Mark Pollock**

In 1998, Mark took on fascinating personal feats, in spite of being blind: racing to the South Pole, six marathons in seven days across the Gobi Desert, and the Tenzing Hillary Everest Marathon. He also won silver and bronze medals rowing in the Commonwealth Games.

In 2010, disaster struck when Mark was left paralyzed after falling from a second-story window. But true to his enduring spirit, he hasn't let paralysis hold him back. He is now exploring the frontiers of spinal cord injury recovery. Using an innovative electrical simulator over his spinal cord and a drug that super-charges his nervous system, Mark is walking hundreds of thousands of steps as the world's leading test pilot of Ekso Bionic robotic legs.

### **Dr. Jaynie Yang**

Dr. Yang is a professor in the Department of Physical Therapy, and a member of the Neuroscience & Mental Health Institute and the Women and Children's Health Research Institute, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada. She is a physical therapist by training (Queen's University), with additional doctoral (University of Waterloo) and post-doctoral (University of Alberta) training in biomechanics and neuroscience, respectively.

Dr. Yang studies how the nervous system controls walking, and explores new ways to retrain walking in people with injury to their nervous system. Current research focuses on retraining walking in adults, after severe spinal cord injury, using a powered exoskeleton, and training of walking in young children with early brain injury from stroke or prematurity.

### **Donna Livingstone**

Donna Livingstone is a physical therapist with more than 15 years of clinical experience. Six years ago she joined Dr. Yang's research team, looking at very new ways to improve walking for individuals with neurological conditions. Livingstone has been training people with spinal cord injuries to walk using an exoskeleton for the last 4 years.

### **Michael Reimer**

Michael was a pilot before the accident. He has flown all over Canada doing aerial mapping, wildlife surveys, and Air Ambulance work. In the summer of 2012 while riding his motorcycle he was hit from behind by a truck. This left him paralyzed from the chest down. Since then he continues to fly for fun with special hand controls.

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# Media Advisory

## **About TELUS World of Science – Edmonton**

TELUS World of Science - Edmonton is a world-class, broad-based science centre that inspires and motivates people to learn about and contribute to science and technology. TELUS World of Science - Edmonton is a leader in providing high quality, interactive programs and exhibits that provide an avenue for both learning and entertainment, and which spark the imagination of people of all ages. The Edmonton Space & Science Foundation is a non-profit organization that operates TELUS World of Science - Edmonton.