



Words in Action Vocabulary

fund-raisers: events where money is raised for a special cause

spinal cord: a cord inside the backbone that carries messages between the brain and the body

paralyzed: unable to move part or all of the body

disabilities: problems doing things like walking or seeing

ultimate: last, greatest

Patrick loves surfing. "It feels like flying," he says.



ROLLING WITH THE WAVES

Patrick has spent most of his life in a wheelchair. But when he wanted to surf, he found a way. Now Patrick wants to walk.

Patrick Ivison cuts through the waves on his surfboard. Like many California teens, he loves to surf. "It feels like flying," he tells *Action*.

Patrick, 15, surfs differently from other teens. He lies down on his board. Sometimes he rides with a dog named Ricochet. They surf together at **fund-raisers**.

When people see Patrick surfing with Ricochet, they pay attention. Sometimes they give money to help Patrick.

The money goes to pay experts who are helping him walk again.

Patrick needs this help because he got hurt as a child. Since then, he has spent most of his time in a wheelchair.

A Terrible Day

When Patrick was just a year old, he was in a horrible accident. A car ran over him.

Patrick's **spinal cord** was crushed. He couldn't move

his arms and legs. He spent months in the hospital.

Doctors did what they could, but Patrick was **paralyzed**. They told Patrick's mom she'd probably have to take care of him for the rest of his life.

Rolling With It

Growing up in San Diego, California, Patrick was always in a wheelchair. But he says he didn't feel very different from other kids.



Patrick sometimes surfs with Ricochet, a golden retriever.

“At recess in elementary school, I’d play just about everything,” remembers Patrick. “I didn’t always win, but I played.”

Patrick also played basketball and soccer with other kids in wheelchairs.

At the beach, Patrick watched his friends using Boogie Boards. He wished he could ride the waves too. “I always wanted to try surfing,” he says.

When Patrick was 8, he learned that some people who were paralyzed could ride special surfboards. Soon, his dream came true. He learned how to surf.

Friends would carry Patrick into the water and push him into a wave. Another surfer would ride with him to keep the board balanced.

Project Walk

Patrick wished he could ride waves by himself. He also wished he could open bottles, take off his shoes, and get dressed without help.

One day, he heard about a program called Project Walk. There, experts help people in wheelchairs do special exercises. After years of work, some of them are able to walk. It sounded great. But it was very expensive.

A group that helps kids with **disabilities** heard about Patrick. The group offered him a trip to Hawaii. He said he wanted to go to Project Walk instead.

At Project Walk, Patrick’s body got stronger. When he was 11, he held onto a bar and stood up for the first time. “I didn’t realize how tall I was!” he told his mom. Patrick’s life began to change.

Patrick with his sister, Samantha, and his mom, Jennifer.



Watch Patrick surf, walk, and talk about his life.

scholastic.com/actionlink

This wheelchair has wide wheels that won’t get stuck in the sand.



The Next Steps

Patrick still goes to Project Walk. People give money to pay for his time there. Every year, he gets stronger.

A year ago, Patrick needed four people to help him walk a few steps. Today, he needs only one person and a walker.

“My **ultimate** goal is to walk across the stage at my high-school graduation,” says Patrick. He feels sure he’ll be able to do it.

Patrick is also growing as a surfer. He can now ride the waves alone.

“I’m working on turning now,” he says. “Once I’m able to get the turns in, I can start doing tricks and stuff. This summer is going to be great.”

—Christy Damio

