



DEGREE of HONOR

A division of Catholic Financial Life

honor

Degree of Honor Publication

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JAKE'S STORY OF TRIUMPH

The word "can't" never defined him. Jake has achieved more than he ever imagined.

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President's Message



During the upcoming Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, as we give and receive, may we give thanks to God for our faith which guides us and inspires us as we live life!

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In a Home Office conference room hangs a framed poster with a quote attributed to President Calvin Coolidge. It reads:

“Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence.

Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent.

Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb.

Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts.

Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent.”

The older I get the more I realize the truth and wisdom of this quote. I might amend it slightly and say, “Persistence and determination guided by faith are omnipotent.” For alone we can do little, but with God we can do much more.

This issue of *Honor* contains a powerful story of persistence. You will meet Jake who persevered through significant challenges. Catholic Financial Life is humbled to play a small part in helping him along the way.

I also encourage you to learn how life changes present important opportunities to ensure financial security through life insurance. See pages 6 and 7 for some things to consider and discuss with young people, couples, parents, retirees, and caregivers in your life. Persevering through the loss of a loved one is difficult enough—life insurance can help prevent financial loss from being another thing to worry about or deal with.

These ideas of persistence, perseverance, determination, and faith are a recipe for success for individuals and organizations alike. In life and business, change is constant. It can be exciting and scary; it can be hopeful and discouraging; it can be invigorating and intimidating. These feelings are not mutually exclusive—they often occur concurrently. They are part of living life.

Thankfully, as people of faith, we have the words of sacred scripture to inspire us:

“Do not fear: I am with you; do not be anxious: I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you...” Isaiah 41:10

During the upcoming Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, as we give and receive, may we give thanks to God for our faith which guides us and inspires us as we live life!

God Bless,

John T. Borgen

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P.S. If I can ever be of assistance to you, please contact me!

Now Accepting Scholarship Applications



It's time to apply for 2024-2025 education scholarships!

Over the last five years, more than \$1.2 million has been awarded to more than 3,000 members.

Tuition scholarships are available for Degree of Honor members who are students in elementary school through college.

Members attending a Catholic grade school are eligible for \$200, Catholic high school \$500, and any college or university \$500 or \$1,000 depending upon whether a member attends a two-year or four-year institution.

Deadline for the 2024-2025 school year is March 31, 2024. Visit degreeofhonor.com/scholarship-programs for additional qualification information and application details.

Scholarships are just one of the many member benefits that sets Catholic Financial Life apart from other life insurance and annuity companies. Visit degreeofhonor.com/membership for a complete list of member benefits.

Do Good Things Launch your IMPACT TEAM today!

Let us help you do good things in your community. Simply gather a team to put on a service project or fundraiser. We'll provide the resources you need to get started—including \$150 in seed money. Then you and your Impact Team can get busy doing good things.

Go to degreeofhonor.com/impact-teams for service ideas, more information, and to apply!

Vietnam Veterans Pinning Ceremony

Impact Team volunteers from Appleton, WI, helped honor and recognize the men and women who served in the Vietnam War that ended nearly 50 years ago with a pinning ceremony. The funds were used to purchase the pins and dessert.

"As a veteran myself, it was an honor for me to organize and present this special day to them."

—Angelica R.





Jake's Story of Triumph

Jake Hesselman celebrates 25-year membership with Catholic Financial Life.

There's nothing holding him back.

Those words were written 25 years ago to describe then 5-year-old Jake Hesselman. Little did anyone know how prophetic those words would prove to be throughout Jake's life.

A bit of history

Jake was born in 1993 with a severe limb deficiency. From day one, his parents refused to allow the word "can't" to define Jake's abilities. They resolved to focus on the things he could do instead of the barriers and limitations he would continually face—a mindset that helped to empower Jake throughout his life.

Jake was a vibrant young boy with enthusiasm and a sense of adventure, but his mobility was limited. The family needed a van to accommodate his motorized wheelchair and give Jake access to the world beyond his front door.

Members from Catholic Knights in Dubuque, IA, and staff from the Catholic Knights home office in Milwaukee, WI, learned of the challenge facing the Hesselman family. Together, they raised the funds required to purchase a properly equipped van in Jake's favorite color—red!

"I don't remember much of that time, but there are copies of articles about the van fundraiser in my parents' house yet today," Jake chuckled.

Fast-forward

The story could have simply ended there, but Jake agreed to attend a chapter dinner in May of 2023 to share more about his life and celebrate his 25-year membership with Catholic Financial Life (Catholic Knights became Catholic Financial Life in 2010).

"I couldn't believe it—there were members there who were involved in the van fundraiser," said Jake. He had the opportunity to share that he now owns and operates his own van.

"I want people to know that my parents are the biggest reason for where I am today, and I appreciate them so much," Jake said. "They told me I couldn't stay home all my life and not have any fun."

Jake took his parents' wise words to heart. In high school, he was actively involved and competed on the wrestling team, a sport that inspired him to reach farther than he ever thought he could.

"Wrestling is one of the most challenging sports to put your body through," Jake said. "But once you do it, you get the mindset that anything else is possible."

Jake started coaching football, wrestling and baseball while in college—pursuing his sports passion for 10 years before shifting his focus to a promising career as a high school teacher at Cornerstone Academy in Dubuque. Jake teaches chemistry, biology, physics and global science in an alternative program for teenagers in need of one-on-one interaction and intensive social, emotional and behavioral support.

"Instead of teaching in front of a class of 25 kids, I work with 14, and I love what I do," said Jake, who knows first-hand the importance of winning the battle in your mind when dealing with adversity. He pours his fortitude into the lives of children who are struggling to succeed in school and in life. "I connect with these kids and let them know that on the good and bad days, I'm here for them."

Ability is what matters

"I call myself handi-capable," Jake said. "My family didn't raise me to be disabled, and always said, 'You can handle it. You just have to do it in a different light.'"

Jake has been living life in a different light for 30 years, and he's still taking on new challenges—pursuing a second master's degree. Jake also serves as Deputy Grand Knight of the Knights of Columbus Council 8384, attends Catholic Financial Life chapter events, is active in his church, and volunteers in the community.

"You can overcome anything if you're willing to put your body, mind and soul into it," Jake said. His resolve is reminiscent of legendary wrestler, Dan Gable, who once said, and who Jake quotes as a sign-off to his emails: "Once you've wrestled, everything else in life is easy."

What lies ahead for Jake is still unfolding, but the words written about him 25 years ago certainly ring true—there's nothing holding him back from achieving his goals and living a full and successful life.

And, by the way—red is still his favorite color!



"You can overcome anything if you're willing to put your body, mind and soul into it."

Jake's amazing sense of humor is on display during Meme Day at the high school where he teaches.



As Life Changes, So Do Financial Concerns

Life is full of changing priorities. That's why ongoing financial discussions are important when planning for a financially secure future.

A new study found that only 52% of Americans own life insurance. And among those who do own life insurance, 21% say they don't have enough coverage.* Here are some instances when it's a good idea to consider life insurance and ensure the right coverage amounts are in place.

*LIMRA 2023 Insurance Barometer Study - Focus on Life Insurance: Ownership, Behaviors, and Attitudes

High school and college grads

They are young, healthy, and ready to start a career—life insurance typically isn't top of mind for high school and college grads. But the younger someone is the more affordable life insurance is to purchase—a 26-year-old healthy woman can buy a \$250,000 term life insurance policy for less than a \$1 a day. Most people spend four times that amount each day on coffee!

A life insurance policy can also safeguard a cosigner from repaying student loans should something happen to a new graduate before student loans are paid off.

It's also a thoughtful and forward-thinking gift—life insurance can ensure a financial safety net for a future spouse and loved ones.

A top reason why grads don't buy life insurance is a lack of knowledge. Tell the young people in your life about the benefits and the affordability of buying life insurance at a young age.

Newly married and growing families

With marriage comes new responsibilities. Every decision will impact someone else, so it's a smart move to buy life insurance.

Purchasing life insurance often centers on replacing the primary breadwinner's income in order to pay the mortgage, school fees, and other household expenses. But it's equally important to purchase a policy for a spouse who runs the household, cares for children, and does a litany of things that would be difficult to replace. Life insurance makes it easier for life to continue without extensive financial burdens should a spouse pass away.

A top reason why newly married and couples with growing families don't buy life insurance is they don't know how much to purchase. Tell the couples in your life about how Catholic Financial Life can work with them to tailor the right products and the right coverage for their particular needs.

The blessing of children

Insuring a child is often overlooked because of limited knowledge about life insurance products. Remember, a policy is less expensive at a younger age, so it's advantageous to lock in a rate when children are young. A policy also affords the possibility to build wealth or a

cash value that can be leveraged in adulthood. It's not uncommon to see grandparents purchase policies as a gift toward their grandchildren's financial future.

A top reason why parents don't buy life insurance for children is lack of understanding about the long-term benefits. Tell the parents in your life about the options to lock in a low rate and build cash value for their children.

Aging loved ones

During later years in life, people often consider final expense life insurance to avoid leaving behind expenses that loved ones will have to pay after they pass. Those expenses could include funeral and burial services, outstanding bills, or anything else.

A final expense policy helps to eliminate the concern of leaving behind a financial burden during the stressful time of losing a loved one. And the best part is that final expense policies don't require medical questions or exams for folks ages 50-80.

A top reason why older people don't buy life insurance is a belief that they won't be accepted. Tell the older folks in your life about Catholic Financial Life final expense life insurance—there's no required medical exam!

Caregivers

Being a caregiver for a loved one is an incredible responsibility and is often overlooked as a reason to buy life insurance. If something happens to a caregiver, be it you, a family member, or someone else, what will happen to the one being cared for? There are tailored opportunities to purchase coverage that will ensure care continues for a loved one should a caregiver pass away.

A top reason why caregivers don't buy life insurance is they never thought about it! Tell the caregivers in your life to consider life insurance so that the people they care for are protected.

Catholic Financial Life is here to help

With every stage of life there are new financial concerns to consider, but one thing is certain: owning life insurance can eliminate financial fears and burdens. Catholic Financial Life exists to help people secure a financial future for their loved ones—and we take that responsibility seriously. To learn more or to review your coverage needs, contact your advisor or call (800) 965-2547.



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We can make the world a better place... one donation at a time

The Catholic Financial Life Foundation makes it easy for you to give to the causes that are important to you.

When you give to the Foundation, you can trust that your donation will:

- Help the poor locally through St. Vincent de Paul and globally through Catholic Relief Services
- Support people with special needs and caregivers through organizations like Special Olympics
- Provide resources to advance the mission of Catholic parishes, schools, and humanitarian organizations

How does it work?

Whether it's a one-time gift or you set up a donor-advised fund, the Foundation can help accomplish your charitable giving goals. Your gift is tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by IRS guidelines.

You can also name the Foundation as a beneficiary of a life insurance policy or annuity to support your favorite charities.

Make a difference through Catholic Financial Life's Foundation.



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