

NEXUS CHAMPION

ALVARO CASTANEDA



“When I first got there, I couldn’t do much, but I started making progress right away.”

On his way home after an evening with friends, Alvaro lost control of his car causing it to flip six times.

“I blacked out. I just don’t remember anymore,” he said. **“Everyone was ejected from the car and I was found face down, bleeding from my nose, mouth and ears, and gasping for air.”**

Once at the hospital, Alvaro was diagnosed with a spinal cord injury, in addition to a punctured lung, broken scapula, broken ribs, and facial fractures. He was in a coma for a week — all the while his family was searching for him. After going to all El Paso hospitals, they found one that had a male patient around his age. When it was finally confirmed to be Alvaro, his mother never left his side.

“The hospital told my family I might not make it, or if I did, I’d be a vegetable. They were in disbelief,” he explained. **“I remember waking up in the hospital and hearing the machines beeping and myself breathing on the machine. Once I woke up, it was decided to move me to another hospital.”**

After three weeks at the trauma hospital, Alvaro was flown to Houston to receive therapy at Nexus Children’s Hospital in the Rise Program. As a quadriplegic with acute hypoxic respiratory failure due to the spinal cord injury, he wasn’t able to move his upper and lower limbs and was on a ventilator. He said, **“When I first got there, I couldn’t do much, but I started making progress right away.”**

“I went from being told I wouldn’t walk again or do things on my own to where I am today because of Nexus,” said Alvaro. **“They started by weaning me**

off the trach. Every time they’d take it off I’d push myself to keep it off a little bit more every time. Then we focused on eating. I started swallowing medications first, then the first real foods, and today I’m eating regularly.”

He also mentioned the therapy at Nexus was amazing — along with the staff. Occupational therapist, David Layfield said, **“Alvaro was focused on walking again, and would tell me he was confident he would, and then he did. He never gave up and always worked hard.”**

Although the road ahead was uncertain, Alvaro remained positive, making friends and cracking jokes — but most importantly, always keeping his head up.

“Now that I’m home, my next goal is standing up on my own. I need assistance right now, but eventually, I’m going to get there and walk again,” he said. **“Nexus really helped me get where I am today. They wanted me to do good and helped my body get stronger while I kept my mind strong.”**



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