**Langford Woman Uses Music To Overcome Brain Injury**

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LANGFORD – When Karen Wilkinson couldn’t find her way through the dark, she looked down at the song written on her skin and clung to the memory of her father. “My dad passed away six years ago of cancer, and I did the eulogy and we played this song and it affected me so much I had a vision of it on my body… it’s like having a hug every day from my dad.”

After what happened last March she needed much more than a hug. It was a saturday afternoon when a leisurely motorcycle ride home from Sooke, for Wilkinson and her partner, turned into a nightmare on a stretch of Sooke Road. They rounded a corner and rode right into a cougar. “He leapt from the left side of the road into our lane, hit us in midair and there was nothing we could’ve done to avoid it.”

The bike went skidding into the ditch. Karen woke up hours later in hospital after suffering a seizure, and couldn’t remember a thing. Over the next few weeks, she realized her brain injury had robbed her of just about everything. “I had no idea who I was, where I was, or why I was for months and months and months. I’d look in the mirror and go who are you…last September I couldn’t add 1+1.”

Plenty of time spent in the weight room has helped heal Wilkinson’s physical wounds, but what’s going on in her head has been tougher to tackle. “It was like hitting a brick wall.”

But music therapy has helped her climb over. “Because I already had such a love for music it was a familiar old friend. It brought me back to where I can feel comfortable about myself.”

Her therapy is being covered by ICBC which tries to match victims of devastating accidents with a recovery regime that fits the individual.
Wilkinson says it might be a year or two before she’s cognitively “back on board” and then she wants to give back to her friends, family, and community some of the support that has her tapping her feet again…and living a new life.

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