

## Brian Boyle

Survivor & Author of *Iron Heart*

It was a horrific car crash. On the way home from swim practice in 2004, eighteen-year old Brian Boyle's future changed in an instant when a dump truck plowed into his vehicle. He was airlifted to a shock-trauma hospital. He had lost sixty percent of his blood, his heart had moved across his chest, and his organs and pelvis were pulverized. He was placed in a medically-induced coma.

When Brian finally emerged from the coma two months later, he had no memory of the accident. He could see and hear, but not move or talk. Unable to communicate to his doctors, nurses, or frantic parents, he heard words like "vegetable" and "nursing home." If he lived, doctors predicted he might not be able to walk again, and certainly not swim. Then, miraculously, Brian clawed his way back to the living. First blinking his eyelids, then squeezing a hand, then smiling, he gradually emerged from his locked-in state. The former swimmer and bodybuilder had lost one hundred pounds.

In 2007 Brian Boyle staged what many consider to be one of the greatest comebacks in sports history when he crossed the finish line at the Hawaii Ironman just three years after leaving the Intensive Care Unit.

In 2008, he competed in the 2008 Foster Grant Ironman 70.3 World Championship in Clearwater, Florida and *Men's Health* magazine named Boyle one of its twenty heroes. In 2009, he published his first book, *Iron Heart*, and he was presented the spokesperson of the year award from the American Red Cross for his contributions. In 2010, he graduated Cum Laude from St. Mary's College of Maryland, ran his first 50 mile ultramarathon, completed his third Ironman in 10:14, and also made his very first blood donation at the hospital that brought him back to life. In 2011, he was awarded the Presidential Award for Excellence from the President of the American Red Cross, Gail McGovern. He launched the Red Cross Iron Heart Campaign to help raise blood donation awareness on a national level, and was recognized by the President of the United States of America as a "Champion of Change" at the White House for his Red Cross volunteer work.

After graduating from college, Brian pursued a professional career in public speaking on a national level that range from keynote topics of inspiration, overcoming adversity, and his efforts as a healthcare advocate. He is currently studying at Johns Hopkins for a Master's of Health Communications, and he has a column with *The Huffington Post*.

His story has been featured on the Ellen DeGeneres Show, NBC's Today Show, ESPN, and several other programs throughout the country that have earned Emmy nominations and awards.

His journey of courage and determination has touched the hearts of many and his story and the message it carries has been celebrated around the world.