



ROAD TO RECOVERY: Pukekohe's Frank Ver Heyen is recovering from a brain aneurism and is a recent recipient of a Franklin Silver Lining Trust special break.

Frank's rebuilding his life with the help of a special gift

By JULIE KAIO

Self-confessed fitness freak Frank Ver Heyen had always taken care of his health.

A fan of exercise, on the cusp of 60 he had picked up kick boxing, been a keen football coach, never smoked and stayed away from the booze.

For a man of his age, even a man 10 years younger, Ver Heyen was in great shape. Yet in May this year, a serious health scare changed the Pukekohe builder's life dramatically.

On his way from one job to another, Ver Heyen suffered a brain aneurism while behind the wheel of his work ute.

He blacked out and crashed into a parked car.

"It happened so quick, there was no sign of what was to come," the grandfather of six said.

When he came to, Ver Heyen managed to call 111 and was rushed to hospital for emergency surgery to ease the bleeding on his brain.

It was touch and go, but Ver Heyen pulled through – and he credits this to his fitness and physical wellbeing.

"I was told only 20 per cent of people who have an aneurism survive, I was one of the lucky ones."

But the road to full recovery has been rough.

Ver Heyen's sight was affected and immediately after surgery, he was completely blind. As the months past, vision has slowly

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Frank Ver Heyen

returned, but it's still not 100 per cent.

He is hoping in three months, he will be able see well enough again to re-gain his driver's licence.

Family has been Ver Heyen's rock, and he's indebted to wife Jan for her stoic support and care.

A special break gifted by the Franklin Silver Lining Trust has also aided his journey to wellness.

The couple received a night away and dinner for two at Castaways resort in Karioitahi as well as massages at Pure Indulgence in Pukekohe.

They will take their special break next month.

"We were over the moon to get this (special break), (I) couldn't believe it," Ver Heyen said.

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Ver Heyen is now focused on



the future and has a new outlook for his years ahead.

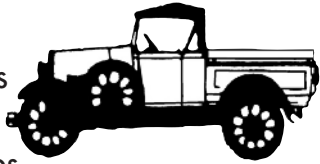
"There's a reason I survived this, and I've got a whole lot more living to do. I don't want anybody feeling sorry for me, I made it through this and I want others to know anybody can make, if they look after themselves. That's the reality, if you look after yourself now, it will make a huge difference."

► PROVIDING A SILVER LINING

The Franklin Silver Lining Trust helps those in our community struggling in times of adversity. The trust provides time-out and getaways for local people going through a difficult time, whether it is themselves or their family. The trust offers some time-out, family respite, grants special wishes and gives support and understanding to both the unwell person and their family. For more information on the Franklin Silver Lining Trust and to nominate a recipient for a special break, you can visit franklinsilverliningtrust.co.nz or the trust's Facebook page.

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