



## Tracey Jacobsen, crash survivor:

In May 2018, my husband and I were struck by a car while crossing a street in Washington, D.C. while visiting from California. My husband sustained nine broken ribs, a shattered breastplate and a lacerated liver. He was hospitalized for two weeks.

My injuries included 10 broken ribs—several of which were crushed in multiple places and punctured my lung, stomach and diaphragm—along with a ruptured spleen. After the initial surgery to repair the damage, I quickly became septic and went into acute heart and lung failure. At this point I required life support. My heart quickly stabilized and I was removed from the Machine, but I required several more surgeries to drain and clean all the infections that had consumed my lungs and chest cavity. Since my ribs had been so badly crushed, my emergency medical team had to rebuild my rib cage making it possible for me to eventually breathe on my own.

After four weeks in the hospital's intensive care unit, my breathing and feeding tubes were finally removed.



It was very scary to have been told that my husband and I were struck by a car, that we never made it home from our vacation, and that I had been on life support. Not to mention the battle wounds on my body.

I spent another two weeks in the hospital getting strong enough to walk, eat, breathe and travel back home. Getting back to California in my condition and finding a medical team to take over my care was extremely challenging. I was blessed to have had a huge support system consisting of friends, family and neighbors. My husband was my biggest advocate. He made my recovery his top priority even though he was recovering from his own injuries. Miraculously my infections cleared at a faster rate than was expected and I was finally discharged 42 days later on July 2nd and was able to fly home on the Fourth of July.



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It has now been almost three years and I feel blessed to have recovered so well. I was healthy and active before the crash and this played a big role in my recovery. I have few limitations and enjoy doing most things I did before the crash. I have worked hard at getting my physical, mental and spiritual strength back and I feel grateful for all the life experiences I have to look forward to. Those battle wounds have now turned into scars that I proudly wear because they serve as a reminder that I am stronger than what tried to kill me.

The road to recovery hasn't been easy, but I carry two words with me every day that connect my time in recovery to where I am now, to **BREATHE** and **WALK**. Be grateful for the new **BREATH** of life I was given and **WALK** in faith every day.

My crash could have been prevented. We were walking through a marked crosswalk on a green light. Both vehicles involved were speeding when the road conditions were slick due to earlier rainfall. One of the vehicles left the scene and was never found which I find incomprehensible since there were multiple video cameras in the area and the vehicle would have had substantial damage. Since I was pretty much unconscious for four weeks I wasn't able to have any conversations with detectives before going back home to California and any video evidence was erased before we could look further into it. I learned that these types of incidents happen frequently and only minimal driving infractions are ever imposed on the persons who cause these types of crashes.

Local decision makers also have a role to play in making streets safer for everyone. I hope things can get changed through legislation and implementing safe street designs to prevent other residents and visitors from going through a similar life changing trauma.

—Tracey Jacobsen

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**DC Families for Safe Streets confronts traffic violence** and its epidemic of tragic injuries and deaths. We are comprised of victims of traffic violence and families whose loved ones have been killed or severely injured by aggressive or reckless driving and dangerous conditions on District streets. We represent the full breadth of the District's diversity and demand an end to traffic violence.

**We bear witness** to our pain and suffering to press for the elimination of fatalities and injuries on our streets. Through our stories and advocacy, we seek cultural and physical changes on our streets and the rapid implementation of Vision Zero.

**We envision** a city where people who walk, roll, bike, and drive can safely co-exist, and children and adults can travel freely without risk of harm – where no loss of life in traffic is acceptable.

**We advocate** for life-saving changes and provide support to those affected by deadly crashes in our communities. We seek changes toward safer streets that might have saved our loved ones, or prevented injuries, as a meaningful way to channel our grief and honor our family members. We work so that no other families suffer the loss or life altering injuries that have impacted our families.