

## Rick Haith

### 2016 EducationQuest Hall of Fame Recipient

As a former EducationQuest scholarship recipient, Rick Haith has not only reached his potential, he has exceeded it.

Rick's accomplishments are amazing when you consider the extraordinary obstacles he overcame to pursue college and a career. Those obstacles have included drug abuse and a tragic car accident that took his friend's life and left him paralyzed.

After the accident in 2000, Rick was lying in his hospital bed at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital thinking he had no future. That's when Dr. Paul Krabbenhoft wheeled into his room.

"Seeing this man in front of me in a wheelchair being called doctor electrified my soul," Rick wrote in this scholarship application. "That was when it hit me that I, too, could have a life after injury."

Rick left Madonna with two goals: to become a recreational therapist - and to work at Madonna so that he could make a difference in people's lives like Dr. Krabbenhoft did for him.



With the help of his *Reaching Your Potential Scholarship*, Rick started his education at Southeast Community College. He earned an associate degree in 2006 and transferred to the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

He graduated from UNO in December 2009 with a bachelor's degree in recreational therapy. He was named the Honors Convocation Winner for being the top student in recreational therapy. Rick achieved both of his goals. He works at Madonna as a recreational therapist where he treats patients on a daily basis - and serves as Madonna's adaptive sports coordinator.

In both roles, he has changed people's lives. Rick has inspired patients to pursue college post injury, and to participate in adaptive sports despite their limitations.

As Madonna's adaptive sports coordinator, Rick facilitates community programs that include wheelchair basketball, adaptive tennis for youth and adults, power soccer, marksmanship, archery, and bowling.

Rick has increased participation in Madonna's adaptive sports and recreation programs from just under 200 participants to around 900 participants. One former patient is currently the back-to-back Quad A National Champion in wheelchair tennis.

Rick also serves as vice president of the Midwestern Conference of the National Wheelchair Basketball Association.

Rick is a true example to his patients of overcoming physical challenges and leading a fulfilling life.