

# ENHANCING SKILLS FOR LIFE

## **Fun with a Purpose: Ronnie Hindsman's Annual Bowling Tournament**

Once a year, Triple J Lanes in Livingston, Texas, hosts Ronnie Hindsman's Bowling Tournament. In addition to the serious bowlers aiming for a perfect 300, you will also see a group sharing tips and tricks for getting the ball down the lane – sometimes for the first time. Many of them are using a special adaptive device since, like Ronnie, they are living without both hands.

In Ronnie's case, in 2004 his job as a lineman led to an electrical accident that caused his limb loss. He faced dramatic life changes and day-to-day challenges. With that in mind, his prosthetist introduced him to Shawn Swanson Johnson. As a Registered Occupational Therapist, she shared practical suggestions as well as encouragement for Ronnie and his wife Ann to attend the Skills for Life (SFL) workshop.

The couple came to Denver in 2008 and met a community that has become a core part of their lives. This group not only understood their challenges but also shared strategies for creating a pathway to regain some independence. Ronnie describes the experience of gathering with 35 people living without upper limbs as "life changing".

"I was green. I didn't know what life would be like," shared Ronnie. "Seeing what everyone else was doing helped. I learned from others and adapted in ways that worked for me."

Ronnie's involvement in the SFL workshops would change the lives of others, too. When he learned that the expense of attending SFL can stop people from attending, he leveraged his love of bowling and his hometown connections to start a tournament in Livingston, Texas. His vision was help people experience SFL resources, friendships, and fun by removing the financial barriers.

Livingston, Texas did not disappoint! With assistance from ESFL and raffle items including donated handmade gun cases, cornhole games, and confections, Ronnie hosted his first bowling tournament in 2019. With a prosthesis tailored just for bowling, Ronnie was the only amputee in attendance—but that would change the following year.

Ronnie found another barrier to eliminate, too. Although Fillauer was no longer making the adaptive device Ronnie used to bowl, he got permission to use the design. Ronnie worked with Johnnie Rouse at Reactive Metals and Brittney Morgan at Texas Assistive Devices to bring the bowling device back on the market. With ten donated devices, many more stepped onto the lane and took a shot at a strike of their own.

Each year, the tournament grows in participation and dollars raised. With the help of his friends, family and the bowling community, Ronnie has held five successful bowling tournaments and raised over \$83,000 benefiting the people who attend Skills for Life.

In addition to his fundraising prowess, Ronnie has explored ways to support his fellow lineman.

“After the injury, it took a while to talk about what happened,” Ronnie stated. “Finally, in 2009, I made a video about my accident and presented at a safety conference. I wasn’t interested in getting paid, just wanted to keep someone else from getting hurt.”

Ronnie took the funds he earned from speaking and established a scholarship for Lamar College students studying to become lineman. Each year, he selects one or two students who are on track to graduate and awards them \$1,000 for tuition.

Sometimes beautiful things come from tragic events. In his very practical approach to life, Ronnie has turned his life experience into positive results, using his personal resources and insight to support others.

“Ronnie has given so much to the world,” shared Johnson. “He is a gift to people of all kinds, from Livingstone to the global Enhancing Skills for Life community. “

If you would like more information about Ronnie’s Sixth Annual Bowling Tournament scheduled February 17-18, 2024, at [Triple J Lanes](#) in Livingston, TX, please visit [Enhancing Skills for Life](#) or contact us at [info@enhancingskillsforlife.org](mailto:info@enhancingskillsforlife.org).