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Surviving to Thriving: Accident Victim's Miracle Recovery

CEDARVILLE, OHIO -- For Cedarville University alumna Olivia Ancil, a miraculous recovery from a near-fatal accident on May 28, 2020 has turned her life from normal to extraordinary.

On May 28, Ancil's life was forever changed when a speeding vehicle traveling 70 miles per hour in a 35 MPH zone, veered onto a pedestrian sidewalk and hit Ancil and her boyfriend, Alex Arent, in Holland, Michigan. Ancil sustained a severe traumatic brain injury, bone fractures (bilateral tibia and fibula fractures, five spinal fractures, rib fractures, skull fractures, and mandibular fractures), cranial nerve III palsy significantly affecting eye movement and vision, and a lung contusion, among others.

Today, Ancil is recovering well from the traumatic injuries--something that most medical professionals on the scene did not believe was possible. In fact, the aftermath from the accident was so difficult to see that when law enforcement officers were called to the location, the main investigator was the person who only investigates fatal accidents.

"There was a medical office near where the accident happened, and doctors and nurses ran out right away to immediately work on stabilizing us," Ancil noted. "Alex was transported by ambulance to the ICU at Butterworth Hospital, and I was airlifted to the same hospital."

Ancil's survival and recovery continues to shock medical professionals.

Upon arriving at the hospital, Ancil began the long and labor-intensive process of recovery. Due to her traumatic brain injury, she lost all memory of the accident and retained no memory of the events in the month following.

Amidst the demands of recovery, Ancil found comfort in worship music as a reminder of God's faithfulness.

"The song "Waymaker" has been so touching to me," Ancil shared. "The chorus calls God 'Miracle Worker,' and that's exactly who he's been throughout this journey. Especially at the beginning with my brain injury and not fully being myself, it was incredible to be reminded of God's presence and love."

Besides growing in her relationship with God, Ancil has grown in her understanding of nursing through her recovery. She graduated from [Cedarville's school of nursing](#) in 2019 and has been serving as a float nurse at Holland Hospital in Holland, Michigan, for the past year.

"I realized what a difference you can make when you take that step to go above and beyond," Ancil added. "You can motivate and encourage, and that means the world to a patient."

As she reflects on her journey thus far, Ancil has become increasingly grateful for the support she's received from friends, family, Cedarville faculty and fellow alumni.

Currently, Ancil is focused on therapy and medical appointments. She prays that her eyes would heal, pain would subside and her body would regain its range of motion.

She is also celebrating her recent engagement.

"Alex had bought the ring before the accident," Ancil shared. "We know that surviving this together doesn't mean life will just be rainbows and flowers moving forward, but being able to love the Lord, love each other and work toward this next step has been one of the most beautiful experiences of my life."

Throughout this trial, Ancil has called to mind lessons she learned during her time as a Cedarville student.

"God's goodness does not depend on my circumstances," she noted. "I may worry, but I have found so much truth in Cedarville President Dr. Thomas White's statement from last year: 'God is faithful. We can trust him.'"

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 4,550 undergraduate, graduate and online students in more than 150 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, including the [Bachelor of Science in Nursing program](#), strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings and high student engagement ranking. For more information about the University, visit www.cedarville.edu.

Written by Heidie Raine