

Ash's Advice: Article 9

By Ashley Moore

Christmas may be more than a month away, but I know most of you have already begun the hunt for a perfect gift for those you love the most. Even if you do not celebrate Christmas, this season's tradition will always be the miracle of giving. Using the American classic, *A Christmas Carol*, I'm going to give you three reasons why one of your gifts should be a donation to The Miami Project and Buoniconti Fund to Cure Paralysis. In the novel, *A Christmas Carol*, Charles Dickens tells the story of a miserable older man named Ebenezer Scrooge who hates everything about Christmas. On Christmas Eve, three ghosts, The Ghost of Christmas Past, The Ghost of Christmas Present, and The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come, visit Scrooge.

Scrooge is reminded of when he still felt emotionally connected to other people by The Ghost of Christmas Past. What if one of your loved ones were in a tragic automobile accident, leaving them paralyzed from the neck down for the rest of his or her life? A search for a way to give your loved one their everyday life back would be your immediate response. Can you picture it? That feeling of complete helplessness is what the families of those paralyzed by spinal cord injuries must experience. I should know, I saw my parents entirely crushed by the idea that their seven-year-old daughter would never walk again. The discoveries made by The Miami Project serve one primary purpose for paralyzed individuals like myself, a source of hope. Your donation this holiday season would spread this hope throughout an entire community of individuals trapped in wheelchairs and loved ones.

From a literary standpoint, The Ghost of Christmas Present described in Dickens' novel represents charity, empathy, and the Christmas spirit Scrooge has lost over the years. Almost every Christmas movie ever made involves an underlying message that Christmas is about giving, not receiving. If any of you decide to donate to The Buoniconti Fund this season, no matter how large or small that gift may be, you will give paralyzed people around the world the blessing of a future where he or she can run, walk, or, in my case, shake someone's hand again.

If we were to further dissect the meaning behind the novel *A Christmas Carol*, we would learn that the reaper-like Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come symbolizes Scrooge's fear of death. He suddenly realizes that he has squandered his life and financial advantages. The first thing Scrooge does after being restored to his regular, present-day life is give back to his friends and family. If anything, the end of this classic American novel displays how enriched a person's life becomes when he or she positively impacts the life of someone going through a difficult time. This very minute there are thousands of people going through a difficult time due to unexpected paralysis caused by a spinal cord injury. Your positive impact on their lives can be as simple as a donation to The Buoniconti Fund to Cure Paralysis this holiday season.

If you watch the Charles Dickens classic, *A Christmas Carol*, this Christmas, remember the lessons of empathy and charity Ebenezer Scrooge learned from the three ghosts' visitation. There may be families experiencing a feeling of hopelessness this holiday season if a spinal cord injury paralyzes a loved one. Thankfully, you can help! The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis gives hope to people like me, which is the best present of all. Feel good about your holiday season and

donate today! I hope everyone reading this has a Happy Thanksgiving and a wonderful holiday season!