

Looking out for a friend

by JESSICA FARRY

Aengus Lyons is a keen football fan, a worshipper of Sligo Rovers and a dedicated follower, a hard worker and a popular man.

But, on February 16 2014 - his life changed drastically.

Aengus was playing indoor football in Sligo with a number of his friends when he slipped and hit his head off the wall. Aengus snapped his spinal cord and suffered cardiac arrest.

He now has a spinal chord injury and is paralysed from the neck down.

Currently in the spinal injury unit in the Mater Hospital in Dublin, Aengus' parents are by his side every day.

The 33-year-old recently underwent surgery, that will hopefully allow him to breathe independently soon, as he is currently relying on a ventilator. Once Aengus does not need to rely on the ventilator he will be moved to the National Rehabilitation Hospital in Dun Laoghaire where he will spend a number of months.

It is then hoped that Aengus can move back home. Friends and relatives of the popular football man have rallied together to try to find ways in which they can help.

A fundraising initiative, Friends of Aengus, has been set up and they hope their efforts can help Aengus with all the changes that will be made to his life once he returns home.

With their initial target set for at least €10,000, Friends of Aengus have currently raised just over €5,000.

It is hoped that the money raised can go towards acquiring a vehicle for Aengus' use once he leaves hospital. He will also require an electric wheelchair.



Aengus Lyons (left) is presented with a signed Rovers jersey by his friend Niall Rooney (right). Pic: Friendsofaengus.com

Friends of Aengus say that he remains hopeful that he will make a recovery, and his spirits were lifted last week when he was presented with a signed Sligo Rovers jersey by his friend, Niall Rooney.

He may not be able to go to games at the minute, but he still follows Rovers closely and is very hopeful that they can turn their season around. Friends say he is very much looking forward to

his return to the Showgrounds. Aengus has previously worked as a volunteer for Sligo Rovers - when he was helping out running the club website and setting up their Twitter account.

This weekend, members of the group are taking on a tough exercise - a twin peak challenge, as part of their fundraising.

They will climb both Mount Snowdon

in Wales and Mount Errigal in Donegal on Saturday May 9, for which they have been training for some time now.

For more information about Aengus Lyons or Friends of Aengus, check out www.friendsofaengus.com.

You can also donate funds to the cause via the website, or via email at donate@friendsofaengus.com. Volunteers are always welcome.