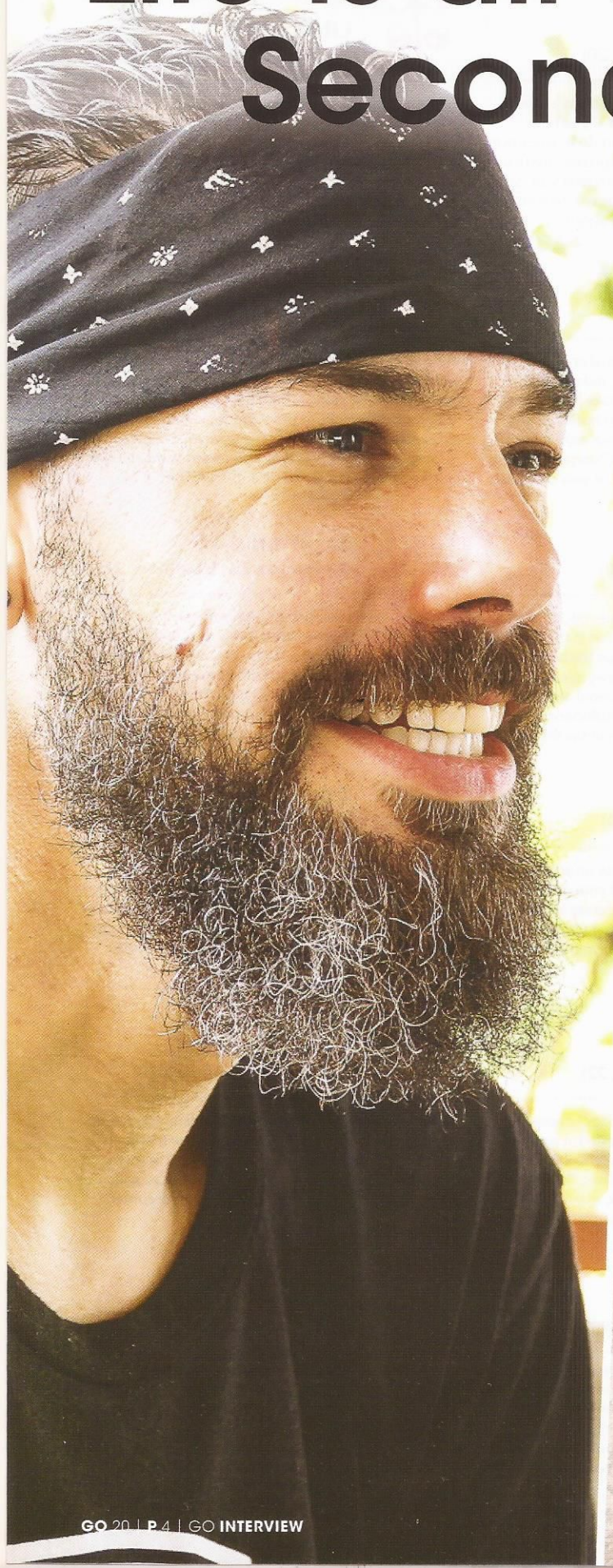


Life is all about Second Chances



If you aren't up to speed with the Recycled Pirate's shenanigans, then you should be! He also goes by the name of Andy Kircher and is known as the man with the silver tongue. He sends out positive messages to the world on a daily basis through his well-visited social media platforms: 'recycledpirate' and '2ndLifeCura-cao' (links below). Look him up and you'll see for yourself that this guy is a word whisperer of some sort.

Andy is one of those individuals who has found the secret to living a happy life. He has managed to turn his hobby into a business spending hours in a day using recycled material, mainly cans, transforming them into works of art. Lately, he has been gaining notoriety for his wonderful candleholders, each precious and inspirational. Getting to this place and moment in his life wasn't easy. Andy suffered a terrible accident three years ago whilst diving, which changed his life forever. Today, he is partially disabled and lives a life of pain. Interestingly, he has been able to use his discomfort to fuel his amazing creations.

The Day Everything Changed

On May 19, 2012 Andy and his late girlfriend Debby went for their usual dive at Marie Pampoen, but the choice they made on that particular day changed the course of both their lives forever. "We screwed up big time," says a sad Andy. "We broke all the rules in the book and went way too deep for way too long so we ended up running out of air as we were coming back up. I managed to exhale all air out of my lungs, but Debby held her breath, which caused her lungs to erupt due to an embolism. When I saw her pale face and blue lips when we came up, I knew that she was in serious danger. I was in a tremendous amount of pain; my back and left leg were killing me. We were both suffering from decompression sickness due to too much Nitrogen in our systems," explains Andy.

Meet the Recycled Pirate & 2ndLifeCuraçao creator Andy Kircher

After a long struggle in the water, Andy managed to get the both of them to shore with the help of others. They were desperately trying to resuscitate her but unfortunately Debby didn't make it. She passed away shortly after reaching the hospital. Andy was flown to Bonaire for treatment on the same day as the decompression chamber in Curaçao was out of service. As much pain as he was in, he knew that if he wanted to walk again he had to keep moving, despite being paralyzed from chest down.

Second Chances

After Bonaire, Andy spent one month in SEHOS, six months in Mgr. Verriet Instituut, before continuing treatment from home. During his rehabilitation, he came to realize that he was surrounded by people who were far worse off than he was. "I made friends with this young guy who lost both arms during a car accident and with Frank, a 17-year-old boy who became paralyzed from the neck down. Their fighting spirit really put things into perspective for me. I can at least fix myself some food. I have the option to go out. They can't even clean after themselves. So I started to look at what I had and started to let go of what I didn't have anymore.

"I use my own words; otherwise they won't do what they're supposed to."

I got a second chance in life and didn't want to waste it feeling sorry for myself. I wanted to use it to get stronger and beat the pain." This is how Andy started to push himself and motivate others around him. "During my rehabilitation at Verriet, I got up every day to set the table for everyone. I walked myself to therapy instead of waiting to be picked up. Soon other clients started doing the same. I realized that when you are a good example, others will follow."

After a year and a half of therapy, Andy was faced with the one question that everyone is confronted with. 'What are you going to do with your life?' In his case this meant a lifestyle change as he was incapacitated. However, he was inspired to start 2ndLifeCuracao, a creative business that is all about adopting waste management in our community. "Reduce, reuse and recycle, this is what I live by," says the pirate. "Our population is growing so we can't keep throwing everything away. Our landfill has limited capacity to process the waste."

More importantly, 2ndLifeCuracao's goal is to become a platform for injured persons to become more self-sustainable. In his eyes, everyone deserves a second chance. "I am currently on welfare and so are many other people who are living with a disability. Can you imagine how amazing it would be if we took matters into our own hands and make an economic contribution to the economy? 2ndLifeCuracao pushes people with little prospect to accomplish more in life instead of sitting around waiting for miracles.

Inspirational Thoughts

Fun Fact! Andy's also a poet. He has been writing poetry ever since he was a kid. He has a career of getting on stages at festivals in the Netherlands to recite his work. So it shouldn't come as a surprise that his daily quotes, which are all his own, has such a big following. His Twitter account has over 7000 followers. "I use my own words; otherwise they won't do what they're supposed to." Andy does not consider himself hero, but he does see the positive effect his words have on people. "After the accident I felt ashamed of even showing my face, but seeing the positive reactions lets me know that this is my way of doing some of the wrong, right." 2ndLifeCuracao.

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