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Dat's How We Roll
Ride 2014

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PEOPLES HEALTH

Your Medicare Health Team

Mary | my MS story

diagnosed 1999

Strength and attitude are two necessary components of life. Little did I know how much my future would be impacted by those two words in 1995 when I quit working to attend college to become an elementary school teacher.

In 1999 my health began to decline. It was my last semester before student teaching, and I started having blurry vision and terrible headaches. After several doctors' visits and an MRI, the woman who was attending college full-time, holding down two part-time jobs, acting as a full-time wife and mother and PTA president would hear the words that would forever change her life: "You have multiple sclerosis." I had no idea the impact MS would have on my life.

I was referred to the National MS Society for information on the disease. I wanted to learn everything about this 'Monster' with which I had been diagnosed. My education continued, but now it was about learning medical terminology along with undergoing physical, occupational and speech therapy. I learned how to use a walker, move my feet when my legs felt like lead and to swallow again. I learned a lot about inner strength and the will to survive. I have been told three times now that I would never walk again, but I guess those doctors didn't know me very well. I still spend a lot of time in a chair and can't walk very far, but I walk in my house; I walk for the simple joy of putting one foot in front of the other.

While in the hospital a psychologist asked me if I had experienced suicidal thoughts. My reply was "Yes, I think about it all the time. Then I think of my child, and those thoughts fade away. He needs me here, now more than ever." My strength and determination come from my son, who at the age of 12 pushed me in my wheelchair across the stage at my graduation to receive a bachelor's degree with honors.

I believe I was diagnosed with MS so I could do what I am meant to do in life: affect change and educate others. Although I am not able to use my degree to be an elementary school teacher, I am able to advocate and teach people of all ages about MS.



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create a world
free of MS