

Bike MS Champion Living with MS

Alyssa Audd

1. When were you diagnosed with MS?

I was diagnosed in October of 2000 and I went to a MS specialist on November 3, 2000 for a second opinion and had the confirmation of that diagnosis.

2. How were you diagnosed with MS?

I formerly was very active with dancing and when I went out with my friends to dance, I noticed that my balance was becoming bad. I then noticed some blurred vision in my right eye. I was only 21 years old and I didn't have any real health problems before so this made me very questionable about the cause of these things. I then started to have numbness and tingling in my fingers and toes. When all that happened, I thought I had pinched a nerve so I went to a sports medicine physician. The doctor said I needed to see a neurologist because he said it was definitely something more than a pinched nerve. After my first appointment with a neurologist, I was given an MRI and some other tests. After seeing the results, I was told that I had multiple sclerosis.

3. How does MS affect your daily life?

For the first 8 years of having MS, MS very minimally affected my life. I could not climb stairs the same but I was able to do most things. I got married, had two children, worked full time and appeared to be pretty healthy to everyone else; however, my MS became extremely active and I had many relapses in my disease. Despite being on my MS medications, I had 24 relapses in 4 years (average of 6 per year). Because of those relapses, I now live with a disability and must use a walker because of my difficulty with getting around. Everything is a bit slower and a bit harder for me but I make the needed accommodations and do my best to get things done.

4. Why is Bike MS important to you?

I worked as a Program Coordinator for the National MS Society/Alabama Chapter for a little over six years. Because of that employment, I have seen the impact of MS on the lives of so many people, other than myself. MS impacts the entire family and the National MS Society does an incredible job with providing services and programs designed specifically to help not only individuals with MS but also each person affected by the disease. Events such as Bike MS make this support a possibility.

5. What's your message to cyclists?

From the words of my sister, Rachel, this is my message to the cyclists of Bike MS: "MS means Maintain Support because everyone including myself should never forget how hard it is for the people living with MS and should know that being supportive and there for the people you love is most important."

6. What is your proudest moment?

My proudest moments are when I see my two children smile.

7. What is your favorite movie?

It may sound cheesy but my favorite movie is "The Notebook".

8. What's on your iPod or what is your favorite band?

I really miss dancing so I have to say David Guetta is my favorite music producer. I can close my eyes and imagine each step that I would take if I were able to dance again.

9. What's the single thing you can't live without?

My faith and my family are two things that I could never live without.

10. What are your hobbies/pastimes:

I enjoy visiting with friends, volunteering at my children's school, I enjoy public speaking, I enjoy being a college student again, I enjoy exercising and lifting weights and I enjoy watching movies with my husband.

11. What do most people not know about you?

I do not brag much or say much about it but I was homecoming queen of my high school.

12. Who is your hero?

Jesus Christ is my exemplar and my hero.

13. Identifier- when a cyclist decides the he/she would like to ride for you, they will ride with an identifier or something that represents you (i.e. stuffed animal, temporary tattoo, flag):

A Yellow Sunflower

For more information about Alyssa please visit www.TriumphThroughTrials.com