



# Bike MS Champion Living with MS



## Stephanie Cleveland

- 1. When were you diagnosed with MS?** I was diagnosed in April of 2011
- 2. How were you diagnosed with MS?** I had lost feeling from my sternum down (alarming), electric shocks down my spine, and felt a kind of fatigue that literally knocked me on my back. I went into my regular physician (thought it was a pinched nerve or the flu) who referred me to a neurologist. After a spinal tap, many MRI's, a neurological exam, physical exam, and lots of blood work I was diagnosed with MS. Lesions were found in my brain and spine.
- 3. How does MS affect your daily life?** Well I can honestly say that MS affects every part of my life. I am a single mother (recently divorced), and my little boy is my world! It can be pretty exhausting and adding MS sometimes seems like a never ending battle. However, a battle that is more than worth it! Although each day is different it seems, I adjust to what I can or can't do. I am grateful for the days where I CAN and that gives me motivation to keep pushing! On days where it's overwhelming and the reality of the disease is all too real, I realize that everyone has something they are given that tries, pushes, and molds them into the person that they need to be. MS is doing that for me 😊
- 4. Why is Bike MS important to you?** I knew about Bike MS, but I had no idea that someone could/would ride in your honor. A friend sent me this link to the Bike MS Champion and as I read I got emotional. I was so moved that someone would want to bike for those of us with MS. Bike MS has a whole new meaning to me. Those who are fortunate enough to do so, do it for a cause! It fills me with such gratitude and I realize that there are so many wonderful, selfless people who work, train and ride...FOR US 😊
- 5. What's your message to cyclists?** I just wanted to say how grateful I am. There was a time in my life where being active was a huge part of who I was. I enjoyed hiking, playing sports, ran a marathon, and was able to do a variety of other activities that I am not able to do. I had participated in CF walks for my family members and with my family, but other than that I never really left my mark or felt like I made much of a difference. YOU ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE! It is so powerful to see your willingness to ride on my behalf! I am in awe and truly humbled to say the least. Thank you for all you do and for wanting to be a part of something much bigger 😊 I look forward to hearing from you and rooting you on!! YOU ARE STUDS!
- 6. What is your proudest moment?** My proudest moment is when I saw my beautiful son for the first time and thought, " I am the luckiest lady on the planet."
- 7. What is your favorite movie?** That is tough. I love 'What About Bob', 'Bride Wars,' 'Fireproof,' any Disney movie, 'You've got Mail.' If it has a nice love story or can make me laugh I am in!
- 8. What's on your iPod or what is your favorite band?** Brad Paisley, Sarah McLachlan, Britt Nicole, Eli Young Band, Carrie Underwood, Katy Perry

9. **What's the single thing you can't live without?** Perspective. Without that I think life would not have a true purpose. I'd just be living, not thriving.
10. **What are your hobbies/pastimes?** I love to spend my time with my son going to the park, playing in the backyard, ice cream trips, beach trips(eternally grateful for my parent's beach house), tickle fights, pool time, and cuddling up in an ICE COLD house watching a good Disney movie. I also enjoy scrapbooking, singing, eating, being outdoors: hiking, lake, swimming (it can't be for too long= I pay for it later). Shopping( on a good day), and spending time with my siblings and amazing mom and dad.
11. **What do most people not know about you?** Most people don't ever really know is how I am REALLY feeling. They see that I look healthy and am smiling so I must be doing fantastic. Well, what they don't know is I stumble, I hurt, I ache, I worry, I cry, I get angry, I forget, I ask why.... but I also grow stronger, build faith, get perspective, count my blessings, look forward with hope, and know that all these things shall work together for my good.
12. **Who is your hero?** My parents are both my hero. When I had nothing left to give they were there. Even when they had no idea what I was feeling or what I needed, they never/and have never left my side. When I filed for divorce they stood by my side, held me through my tears, gripped my hands during disheartening doctor visits, and provided me with words of wisdom when I thought all was lost. They are my rock. They have always been a huge part of my life. I made a silly deal with them that because of their help and care for me throughout my life and especially now that when they are old and fragile that I will change their diapers (A little gross, but we get a good laugh). In all seriousness though I will return the favor and always be there for them as well.
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 weaved friendship bracelet