

Bike MS Champion Living with MS

Wendy Higham

1. When were you diagnosed with MS?

March 2010

2. How were you diagnosed with MS?

I had been having symptoms of MS such as seizures, severe loss of balance and coordination, headaches, numbness and tingling in my extremities and face, memory loss, extremely high white blood count, there was a lesion on my brain but my spinal tap always was clean, loss of speech and inability to read since May 2006 but they could not figure out what was wrong with me. Then in March 2010 I went into my Neurologist's office because I could not move my head because my neck was so stiff. They did an MRI and I had a lesion on my neck. They repeated the spinal tap and this time it came out positive for MS.

3. How does MS affect your daily life?

This is going to sound weird but finding out that I have MS was almost a blessing. In 2006, I had lost my life. I was unable to walk, talk and participate in anything normal. I thought I was going crazy. Having the diagnosis of MS was finally an answer for me. The medication gave me the ability to walk, and talk normal again. I am able to read, not as fast and my comprehension is not as good but I am doing it!!!! I am still having to remember that I do have a disease and that I have to slow down, I am a go getter and want to do everything and when I do that, it puts me in bed for a day or two and sometimes a week. I can't be outside in the heat, it really makes me sick so I can't play with my granddaughter like she wants me to and that is hard.

4. Why is Bike MS important to you?

Bike MS is important to me because I know that the medication and research is so important to MS. I was on Rebif and it damaged my liver and now I cannot take any medication that goes through my liver. This is very difficult because Rebif was a medication that worked so well for me and the medication that I am now taking, which is my only option now helps, but not as well. I pray that with the monies Bike MS raises research can find more options for me and others who need more medication options.

5. What's your message to cyclists?

Thank you for riding and raising money for the MS cause. It is a dream of mine to ride one day for Bike MS. I admire you for being able to do this for me and all of us out there who cannot do this at this time. You are making a great impact on my life and on some many other people's lives. Thank you for your sacrifice that you are making of your time and money for training, riding, and giving....you are truly giving a gift of hope.

6. What is your proudest moment?

Graduating with my B.S degree in Psychology

7. What is your favorite movie?

My favorite movie, that is a loaded question. I love psychological thrillers so I love *Seven*. But I love classics as well so I also love *It Happened One Night*. One a comedy level *Blades of Glory*, romantic comedy *The Ugly Truth*, Teen Romantic *A Walk to Remember*, Drama and Action would be anything to do with war movies and gangsters *We Were Soldiers*, *Saving Private Ryan*, *Patton*, *Defiance*, *The Departed*, *Casino*.

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

I do not have a favorite band or an iPod for that matter. I just listen to the radio but my station is always set to KBER 101.1 but I can listen to pretty much anything, not that hip on rap.

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

My water bottle. I carry it around everywhere I go. My dad used to joke that my nieces would never learn to drink from a cup because I always had a water bottle and they wanted to drink from that instead.

10. What are your hobbies/pastimes:

Currently my only hobby really is volunteering and advocating for the MS Society, which I love. Since being diagnosed with MS my other hobbies and past times have become one in the same –past time, I have not done them since being diagnosed and I miss them, and I should try doing them but because of lack of concentration and physical activity I have not but they are hand quilting, scrapbooking, cross-stitching, and water fights, playing basketball and softball.

11. What do most people not know about you?

That I work out at the gym on a regular basis with a personal trainer who also has MS.

12. Who is your hero?

My grandparents

13. Identifier- when a cyclists 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):

My Walk MS team name is Ninnie's Hope (Ninnie is my nickname I was given by my niece when she could not say her W when she was one. My grandma called my Winnie Pooh) So something that says Ninnie's Hope in keeping with my Walk MS tradition that I started last year. Or a Winnie the Pooh stuff animal for Winnie Pooh.