

Tiffany Onorato



In June of 2013, 26-year-old Tiffany started seeing double. She noticed her left eyelid was slightly drooping, so she made an appointment with an Ophthalmologist. As her symptoms progressed, her facial muscles began to weaken and she was formally diagnosed with Myasthenia Gravis shortly after.

“Before Myasthenia Gravis I was very active, enjoying life by backpacking through Europe, building schools in developing nations and starting my life as a young professional in NYC,” Tiffany said. “I have had to redefine my life in so many ways I never thought I would have to as a young adult.”

Independent by nature, Tiffany struggled with having to rely on other people during her first year of diagnosis. She said she had to learn how to ask for help – something she never knew how to do before she became ill.

“As often as I curse my disease, there are days were I am truly thankful for the lessons it has taught me. I have become such a better person and truly understand what it means to be grateful for the littlest things in life. I take nothing for granted,” Tiffany said.

In less than one year, Tiffany underwent two hospital stays, a thymectomy, chemotherapy, IVIG treatments and a lot of steroid medication. Today, at age 27, Tiffany has a personal nurse who comes to her apartment every four weeks to administer treatment.

“Patients with MG maintain normal life while having to battle for their health every single day,” said Tiffany. “But these battles should be celebrated for creating such courageous and strong individuals.”

Shortly after her diagnosis, Tiffany discovered the Myasthenia Gravis Foundation of America (MGFA) and decided to attend an MG support group in Manhattan. For Tiffany, she said this support group was her first and most important coping mechanism

“Since MG is such a rare disease, I had never met anyone else with who was living with it,” she said. “It can be a very lonely and scary feeling. However, being able to get together once a month with other patients was very helpful in not only educating me about the treatments available, but in getting me to laugh!”

It was in this support group that she learned about the MG Walk Campaign, and signed up right away. Tiffany inspired her community immediately, and was named the 2014 TriState MG Walk Hero. As a result of her continuing and passionate participation, Tiffany Onorato was later named the 2015 National MG Walk Hero.

“After having the hardest year of my life, it was an honor to be named the National MG Walk Hero,” Tiffany said. “I hope to use this position to serve as a resource for the many people around the country who live with MG and for their caretakers who provide relentless support. I may not have a choice of how strong I may be each day, but I do have a choice to take MG and turn it into something positive and a make a difference in the lives of others.”

Before MG, Tiffany was a dancer for 20 years, dancing her way through high school and college. For the first time since her diagnosis, Tiffany has started getting back to the gym and attending Zumba classes at least once a week.

“I’m so excited to be able to dance again, even if it’s only once a week,” she said. “My goal is to work up my strength to eventually become a Zumba instructor or to run a 5K!”

To learn more about how you can help create a world without MG, visit

<http://www.myasthenia.org/HowcanIhelp.aspx>.