

# Tom Larsen



When Tom was first diagnosed with MG nine years ago, he had difficulty speaking, chewing, swallowing and holding up his head.

Diagnosed in May 2008, he was unable to blow out the candles of his 67<sup>th</sup> birthday cake by late June.

Since Myasthenia Gravis causes “grave muscle weakness,” Tom eventually had to leave his job as a defense consultant, and currently takes three separate medications to help his symptoms. Although his journey with MG over the last decade has not been an easy one—

from suffering a crisis that left him hospitalized for 35 days (22 days in the ICU) to having to undergo more than a week of plasmapheresis—Tom has maintained a positive outlook on life.

“People say they admire my strength. I tell them, I have no strength! I run on sheer willpower,” Tom said. “I try to do something fun every day. I have a very large team of prayer warriors who strongly supported me during my crisis. In return, I served a three-year term as a Deacon at our church, ministering to the needs of the homeless, elderly, sick and bereaved. I am living with adversity, but still giving thanks!”

Although he says he is more sedentary than he should be, Tom and his family are very active in the northern Virginia MG Support Group. It’s in the support group that Tom can listen to others’ stories and share his, as well as information regarding the best local doctors and top specialists.

“I believe every attendee would tell you their life is far better since finding the support group,” he said. Tom also actively leads the cooking crew for his church’s monthly Men’s Breakfast and cooks for his local gourmet club

In preparation for the 2013 Metro DC MG Walk, Tom formed the team, “Tom’s Rockets – Blast Off for the Cure!” raising more than \$5,000 dollars for MG that year and more than \$9,200 the year following, earning him the title of 2014 DC Metro/Virginia MG Walk Hero.

“The reason I work so hard to raise money for research is that I truly believe we will find a cure within my lifetime,” Tom said. “It is really for the very young children that I work the hardest, so they don't have to endure a lifetime of MG.”

To learn more about how you can help create a world without MG, visit <http://www.myasthenia.org/HowcanIhelp.aspx>.