

STILL STANDING

*(Take the dis out of disAbility)
Never quit and Never give up*

Here is My Summarize Journey:

On January 26, 2006 I was in a Automobile Accident in the Collision I was Rear Ended and Sustained Trauma to my Neck that caused symptoms relating too Severe Whip Lash, Chronic Fatigue Pain with Stiffness& Swelling to my Joints in my Neck and Shoulders. The Migraine Head Aches were excruciating and these symptoms didn't start at the time of the accident but began days later. I went to my Dr. who referred me too Rehab so I could have Physical Therapy I received treatment for months to help with the pain and discomfort but it wasn't working. Prior to the accident I had no Health problems and I had what you would call a clean bill of health. I was very active, I enjoyed the outdoors I walked at Least four times a week, played tennis, basketball, and went skating and bowling with my teenage son. During the following months my health declined I experienced numbness in my legs, I would fall down because of the absence of sensations to my legs. The Dr. and the rehab therapist were unable to find the problem, I began loosing weight about 50lbs with in a six months time period this was a result of loosing my appetite, I also began loosing my hair I was frantic and scared. I was unable to maintain a full time workload schedule, so I decreased my school hours to part-time but I continued working full time so I could financially sustained a comfortable living for my son and myself.

Eventually I started seeking a Natural Holistic Medical approach for dealing with my health this was about nine months of doing things the medical Dr' way. On my very first visit the physician didn't pull any punches he said if I didn't find the solutions very soon I was going to be in multi-system failure with my major organs heart, lungs, kidneys and liver were all in jeopardy my lab work reflected this finding my body was now toxic. After three months of taking healthy herbs and natural products I ended up being rushed to Emergency Room. I was in shock unable to think clear dizzy and sweating, feverish unable to stand up on my feet. My Health had finally taken it's toll I was admitted this was on January 28, 2007 this was year following the accident.

Because I had no medical history the hospital had no base line medical directions in which they could go. Over the next couple of weeks they order extended lab work, ex-rays and any other test and interventions that would help with my mysterious health crisis.

I began giving the Dr.s my family history I shared how loosing my four year old son who had passed away in Nov of 1994 from a child hood cancer Rhabdomyosarcma (a soft tissue cancer that affect the muscles of the body) I explain to the Dr's how the up's and down's of dealing and battling with the terminal disease for eight months took it's toll on me and how the lasting emotional affect of loosing my son still silently affect

me. I then explain how grief could be a very dark place. The loss of my mother very soon after my son also diagnosed with a sarcoma but of the brain and she passed on Jan 1996 she was 50 years young. My dad passed on September 2007 due to heart failure. The Dr. asked about my grandparents so I shared their history, my mother's parents, my grandmother died from a stroke after suffering with high blood pressure and uncontrolled diabetes in which she had to have her leg amputated fifteen years earlier before she passed away in her early eighties. My grandfather died from colon cancer at age 45 I never knew him I wasn't born but my mother said she was a teenager. Our family history is very important and plays a great factor to our health and preconditions it can give Dr's some type of directions and give them ideas to sort out medical problems.

Months followed and I remained in the hospital I continued shedding pounds I dropped down to 68lbs my normal body weight was 145lbs because of this drastic weight loss I had to have a tube place in my stomach in order to maintain my nutrition. I was so afraid I also felt a shame and embarrassed because of my medical condition because I was a nurse and I felt like how could I have allowed this to happen. Of course this wasn't my fault but deep down inside this played out in my mind, I began blaming my strenuous schedule and how I always pushed myself to the limit I've always been a little stubborn and determined to do my best, I aimed high even if I wasn't feeling well I would ignore my needs to help others.

My career as a nurse over a twenty year span reflects that ambition I started in the health field at age seventeen I worked in a group home that housed mentally retarded adults, who were physically challenged, some were quad/paraplegics with psychological challenges. I worked for Easter Seals and United Cerebral Palsy organizations with special needs children that had learning and physical disabilities. I worked for Children Home Society who operated under the Department of Children and Family as a personal care counselor assisting kids who were abused and abandon. I did Home Health and I worked for Hospice my influence for helping and comforting people who were dying came from the experience I went through at age ten when my uncle died in my home. He came to live with us two years prior to his demise, my mom was a nurse so my mother's siblings and grandmother decided that my mom could care for him he had been diagnosed with lung cancer(emphysema) it was a grueling two years of suffering before he passed I would help my mom take care of him. I prayed for him every day for God to heal him but he died it really affected my family because he died in are home and emotionally that took a toll on all of us, my mom decided that it was best that we moved and get another home to help with the emotional healing.

As a nurse we make choices based on experiences or emotionally touches us and those interest can challenges our insight, I have been driven by both.

My love for children pointed me in the direction of becoming a public school nurse, then I worked for a Adult Mental Health Substance Abuse Out Reach Community Center. Eventually I went back to school and continued my education so I decided to challenge myself and became a Correctional Nurse so working years prior in the hospital on the mental health unit really prepared me psychological to work with criminals and people who are great at manipulating others I had to become someone different. I was still a nurse but in corrections dealing with inmates you will become a target if your

to soft caring and gullible. I did my job but I became stern and a lot more focused especially when coming into close contact with them, I made sure I kept a line of respect for their health and well being above their criminal accusations which landed them in jail. Yes I love being a Nurse It's my calling I enjoy helping people no matter in what arena.

Unfortunately now it's not me helping other's I'm now in need of help this is something very new to me unfamiliar. I was doubtful and fearful it was my personal battle. After about four months of being hospitalized I tried to get out of bed and I could no longer stand I had no feelings in my legs I was devastated I could not stand or walk this affect me psychologically I fell into a deep depression feelings of hopelessness came over me. I was eventually transferred to a long term care facility there I develop a decubitus ulcer the size of two tennis balls as a result of catching a deadly flesh eating bacteria the infection is called Mersa so when anyone visited me or entered the room including the medical staff they would have to be in complete isolation gear they had to wash up, gown up, put on mask and wash up before enter and leaving the room. The visitors had limited visits to prevent contamination because I could catch germs from outside and it could kill me. When my family, friends and church family would visit they would pray with me. I recall a incident when my sister actually place scriptures from the bible on the walls, the Healing Scriptures of Gods Words I would recite and Meditate on them. The Healing Power of God Words are Devine Law but since the accident in 2006 I became pre occupied with anxiety, doubt and fear. I had allowed these feelings to over take my mind during that year.

I had forgot what the word of God Promises Us, His word says He will Bless us and give us the Desires of our hearts. I had to decontaminate my faith, I had heard this from a paster on a christian television program. I had to believe in the Word of God no matter how I physically felt, or no matter what the Dr. said I had to stay strong and believe no matter what so I began dwelling and meditating on Scriptures like Isaiah 40:31 that says "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings as eagles; They shall run and not be weary and they shall walk and not faint.

One day after I was praising and thanking Jesus for Life and Living a small voice said "It's not personal" All that you have gone thru it's not personal. "God still loves me" After that revelation I began focusing on the present and not the past! I focused on my love ones who were here with me now and I needed to stop feeling like a victim. I focused on my son that god had blessed me with three years after the passing of my first son. Each time my son would come to visit me he would coach me and encourage me to eat and get better so I could come home the love between a mother and her children is priceless, Just like the Love of God for us his children" My son's Love became my motivation to fight for life.

The weeks following the Dr's finally found a diagnosis I had Lupus It was triggered by the accident. It' caused by a Immune Dysfunction in which the Immune system mistakenly attacks itself! It causes severe pain and swelling to joints, cartilage tissue lining causing synovial fluid dryness through-out the body and this create stiffness and excruciating pain that involves inability to move limbs. I also have a second diagnosis called Transverse Myelitis a Neurological Disorder caused by inflammation of the spinal

cord, transverse describe the posterior damage too the myelin(fatty insulated cover of the nerve cell fibers. This causes nervous system scarring that interrupts communications between nerves in the spinal cord and the rest of the body. Transverse Demyelination occurs in the leg movement, bowel and bladder control. After doing research on the internet I came to realize that the sever whiplash caused a insufficient flow of blood and oxygen to normally circulate through my spinal cord and because of this my spinal cord became weaken and was unable to normally function because it went undiagnosed and overlooked for so long I'm paraplegic and now confined to a wheel chair.

In the hospital my health began rapidly recovering and I was stable so I was discharged and was able to go home it had been a long eight months the Dr's was still very concern so they authorized home health medical visits. I had a Aide who came over three days a week to clean me up and bathe me before the RN would come and do wound care that involved electrical therapeutic therapy to keep the wound free of infection. The indwelling cathier was change ever three weeks to prevent infection but that didn't help I ended up with several UTI's and had to have bladder surgery because I had develop stones. My Emergency Room visits extended beyond thirty visit with in the first year of coming home, the atmosphere of the ER is depressing, but I had to go if my temperature would elevates over 101' I had to see about seven different specialist to accommodate my medical circumstances a blood clot in my left leg also developed in the nursing home so I had to be placed on Coumadin(a blood thinner) to stay in compliance with blood levels I had to go every week to the clinic sometimes twice week depending on blood results, these clinics are packed and crowd with people it would take from four to six hours long, those trips there were exhausting. I was still very frail unable to really sit up I had only gained about 100lbs so it was still very hard for me, most of my days I would spend in bed before I was discharged I had medical equipment ~~was~~ delivered to my home. A hospital bed with a special air mattress too help with circulation and prevent me from putting un wanted pressure on my body help maintain my skin, I would be turned every two hours when I was in bed to also insure I would not have any more break downs due to pressure a colostomy surgery was performed right after I got the wound to help prevent infection. I was placed on steroids so I began rapidly gaining weight this really gave me a good appetite and I got more energy so I started going to rehab I felt good about rehab getting exercise the physical work and seeing progress made me motivated to want to do more, but after eight weeks I was told by my therapist that my insurance would not approve any more visits, that eight weeks was the maximum coverage so my rehab days were short lived I became very sad and disappointed.

My family and friends encouraged me they began spending time with me coming over and helping me exercise we followed some of the routine things we did at rehab but they also made up their own they supported me we prayed I really felt so loved they refused to allow me to get distracted from my goal, regardless to the Insurance dilemma that affected my rehab. One day during a quest to find a local gym that had specialized equipment like standing machines and motorized bikes that would actively assist and help people who have disability, especially specific to being paraplegic my

determination paid off I found a handicap/disabled local gym that was own by the city it didn't cost anything and was not govern by insurance policies and procedure my only obstacles was getting there, I needed to ask other's to take me there, I had gotten so help from everyone who loved me but it had been about three years now since that day which impacted my life and turned things upside down. I had support encouragement but inwardly I couldn't help feeling like a bother I didn't want to become a burden but I still needed people's help to get to the gym I Prayed for my independence. I asked and several of my male family member's who could pick me up physically would take me, they pushed me I worked out hard, the gym hours were only three days a week and open only three hours during operations but I was dedicated and faithful I regained my strength, I gained more weight I was now about a 140lbs 2009 was a great productive invigorating year things were heading in the right direction again, I was on the horse again even though I had fallen off I was back up and riding my journey may not have been easy the obstacles may not been fair or favorable but I went thru things and there use to be times I didn't think I would make it But I Learned that thru those time we need to turn to God and he will carry us through.

I realize that the word of god is electrifying it's powerful like. On February 2010 when I had too have yet another major surgery to close the wound infection had spread to the bone so I had to have a reconstruction of the sacral that's the medical terminology. I did everything to try and get it to heal naturally but it just would not heal. Then on September 18, 2010 a day after my 42 birthday I accidentally fell from my wheel chair I had to have emergency surgery the steroids I had taken for two years to gain the weight affect the calcium formation in my bones. I broke both femur bones they snap in two when i fell to the pavement on my knees. I had to have Bi-lateral femur reconstruction rods and pins placed in both legs I was back in the hospital I had to stay eight weeks of recovery then that following December of 2010 my very close aunt who encouraged and helped me in 2007 passed away she was diagnosed with cancer. Unfortunately four months after that another very close aunt who also supported me during the time when I was sick passed away and would you believe it was cancer. Then yet another very close aunt passed away seven months later she had a brain sarcoma all three were my mother beautiful sisters. As you can see my life has been a testimony full of some sad and depressing experiences but also there were many times I was able to hold it all together and I was able to share, give and care very much for other's regardless to my personal obstacles.

I love God and I know he loves me, having Faith in God is knowing and having confidence that he will see you through. I'm still standing even though I'm in the chair my son and I live alone my Prayer to be independent has been answered. I can wheel my self in my manual chair or I can get around and go shopping for my self in the electrical chair that takes me to the mall, super market and movies any place my son I want to go. I enjoy working out at the disability gym it helps me stay strong and physically healthy. Because of the Lupus I have to stay out direct sun light and try to stay as stress free as possible. I use natural products on my skin, hair and I also changed my diet to a much healthier diet a lot of green leafy veggies and no red meat I'm working on become vegan and diet full of veggies is Powerhouse of energy. I drink plenty of water and

natural drinks. I enjoy meditating daily cleansing my mind as well as my body keeps me grounded and focus I can do nothing without God.

Some days It's not easy but I will never quit I don't give up I have come to a place to realize that I don't have to have the best of ever thing anymore I just need try and make the best out of the situation. I don't overdo it I really get enough sleep and a lot of rest now, I never did that before, there was never enough time in the day to get things done.

I pray to God to get me through one day at a time and I wake up each morning Thanking and Praising him for his Blessing and Grace that protects me and my son. I Love Life and I really appreciate the opportunity to share my life experiences and journey I hope it will encourage and Inspire other people to never give up no matter what they may be going through. And I'm so very grateful to still have a voice and I tell everyone I meet about the love of Jesus and His Greatness.

BLESSED&HIGHLY FAVORED

KATRINA CARTER