

Positive Spirits...Positive Results

BY JOSH DONLEY

CMT has run in my family for many generations. I was diagnosed with CMT when I was a teenager and had my first surgery when I was 17 years old. I had played golf extensively throughout high school on the golf team but started having trouble playing well when CMT hit me. My cousin, Jason Everhart, was a great motivation to me when I was first diagnosed. He was diagnosed with CMT as a child, but determined to stay active in sports and weight lifting despite the disease. He always had a great attitude about his CMT, so I determined I, too, would strive to keep a positive spirit and not let CMT affect my life in a negative way.

Other family members were also a great support system for me. My grandmother, Peggy Jumper, my mother, Cynthia Donley, and others have set positive examples of dealing with the disease. My sister, Angel

Donley, is a nurse at Brenner's Children's Hospital, where my surgeries were performed. She can always answer the medical questions that nag me. I've had a triple arthrodesis of the left foot with a posterior tibial tendon transfer and a plantar fascia release. The same procedure was done on my right foot two years later. I also had a procedure to help straighten the toes on my right foot. Dr. Andrew Koman of Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center did all my foot surgeries as well as having operated on three generations of my family.

I began working out with weights in college but did not do much cardiovascular exercise. My wife, Maggie, is an exercise enthusiast who always gives me motivation and strength. She convinced me to start cycling in 2004 to help my cardiovascular endurance. I was hesitant at first, but decided to give it a try. Since then, I have ridden in the Tour to Tanglewood, a ride for MS which was approximately 50 miles, and I rode the first day of Cycle North Carolina, which was a 63-mile ride through the mountains of Asheville, NC. I plan to eventually ride all seven days of Cycle North Carolina, which rides from the mountains, across the state, to the beaches of the Atlantic.

Cycling has helped not only with my cardiovascular fitness, but also with my balance, leg strength, and desire to encourage others to exercise. I feel that, although the limitations are

sometimes difficult, CMT has positively affected my character and my life. Amazingly, my outlook on life and my relationships with others have been enhanced because of having CMT. Not only have I surpassed the physical limitations, but I continue to fight the less obvious mental limitations through my faith and my family. I sincerely believe that one can do anything he sets his mind and heart to. Once you have a limitation of this sort, it is much easier to recognize the struggles of others, and be cognizant of ways you can help. The interesting twist is that the people who have inspired me the most (like my wife) say that I have inspired them in different ways. I believe there is a reason that some people are given outward limitations, and I trust that I will not waste the opportunity to use having CMT in a positive way.

I thank God for the strength I have to maintain an active lifestyle and the wonderful family I have that is such an encouragement to me. My wife Maggie has been more of a motivation and encouragement to me than she could ever know. I am forever indebted to the wonderful people in my life. I now reside in Walnut Cove, NC with my wife and two dogs. I'm a financial planner in Winston-Salem, NC. My main objective at this point in my life is to stay positive and to encourage others to try and accomplish their dreams. *

Josh rode 63 miles in Cycle North Carolina and hopes to complete all 7 days of the ride eventually.

