



# Mallory and Michelle

## Diagnosed in 2005 // Their MS story

On Friday, May 18, 2005, I took Mallory to her pediatrician because she was limping, unable to get dressed, and making a squinting gesture with the left side of her face. She was admitted to the hospital that afternoon. After an MRI and a visit with the Neurosurgeon we were told that Mallory had terminal, inoperable brain tumors. Test after test, loads of steroids, and 3 spinal taps later there were still no answers and no improvement. After a few weeks of frustrating, invasive, inconclusive testing they sent us to Texas Children's Hospital in Houston. There we were met doctors who finally were able to diagnose her with ADEM (Acute Demyelinating Encephalomyelitis). When we left Houston Mallory was weak and unable to sit up or walk unassisted. She was fitted with a brace on her hand and an AFO on her left foot. She started PT and OT and within two weeks, she was walking again. She was making progress and we thought we were out of the woods.

In October 2005, Mallory was back in the hospital presenting right sided paralysis and facial / speech issues. Then, at the end of January 2006, we found ourselves back in the hospital a third time. On February 15, 2006, Mallory's diagnosis was changed to MS. At that time, at the age of 4, our sweet Mallory was the youngest child to be diagnosed with MS in Lubbock, TX and one of the youngest to be seen at Texas Children's.

For the following 5 years, Mallory would take injections 3 times a week. We are so grateful that Mallory has not had any new exacerbations. She does, however, have long term physical and cognitive struggles that she bravely battles each day related to those first three attacks so many years ago. Due to muscle/tendon tightness and spasticity, she has had multiple painful surgeries, pokes, and procedures than one person should have to endure.

Today, Mallory is a happy, thriving 21-year-old. Working, hanging out with friends, dancing when she gets time and living a rather normal life. She enjoys getting dressed up, fixing her hair and is a pro at applying make-up. It can be a struggle for her watching her friends do things that she is still dreaming of doing, such as dating and driving. She has dreams of becoming a teacher, however her struggles with reading and basic math are something that she is striving to overcome. In the meantime, she is working as a teacher's assistant and she loves the children in her care. There are so many things that Mallory continues to excel in.

One thing that Mallory is well known for is her kind, compassionate heart. She is respectful and patient with those around her, and full of love for everyone in her life. She truly has the most beautiful spirit. She continues living each day, moment by moment, with gratitude. She shows us all every day how to live and appreciate life no matter what the future holds. Mallory has shown so much grace and she is an inspiration to us all.

As her mother, I will continue doing these rides and raise awareness for my hero, Mallory, and so many others that have been affected by MS. Because of funds raised by these rides and so many other foundations, new medications and therapies have been developed since our sweet girl was diagnosed 17 plus years ago. At the end of each ride, I along with others riding for the same cause, remind ourselves that our physical pain is over. Mallory and so many others that live each day with this disease, suffer with this pain every day. Until there is a cure, I will keep pedaling, no matter how hard it is.

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*Don't just ride, Bike MS*

# Jerry Savoy

Diagnosed in 2004 //my MS story

When I was first diagnosed, I was excited to get the diagnosis. I had gone to my primary doctor for head and neck pain, as well as numbness in my left arm. I was sent to get an MRI, when I was told that I had multiple brain tumors. Sitting in the neurologist's office, my wife and I were prepared for the worst. When the neurologist told me it wasn't brain tumors but brain lesions, I was excited to know that it wasn't brain tumors but still didn't know much about MS. After getting a lumbar puncture it was confirmed, and I was officially diagnosed with multiple sclerosis on December 23, 2004.

At the time, there were only 3 treatments available. I thought that having MS would be manageable, as I had already been living with a knee injury since 1991. In 2009, I had a major relapse, which put me in a wheelchair, and was sent to Houston to assess if I had secondary progression MS. I had a pseudo relapse where symptoms flared up because of other issues.

I was living in the Permian Basin area when I received my diagnoses and thankfully I was working for the Huffman Company. Dan Huffman provided me with tremendous support during this time. My mounting medical problems and 20 years of disability had made it very difficult and frustrating for me to provide as a husband and father. And even though my disability was finally approved in 2012, I had to come to the realization that my income would be reduced significantly.

Now, equilibrium issues are my primary symptom, so I often rely on a cane and my walker for stability. Despite these obstacles and the depression that came with it, I have learned to find the brighter side of life and appreciate the family, friends, and amazing support system that surrounds me. I haven't had a major relapse since 2009 and look forward to fundraising and the Bike MS event every year.



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# Joy Miller

Diagnosed in 2013 //my MS story



My husband and I started dating in 2008. He told me that he loved riding his bike, being outside, cars (specifically Hondas), you know, all of the typical things when you're getting to know each other. In 2009 I realized how much he REALLY loved riding when he signed up for his first Bike MS Cactus and Crude. We didn't know what MS was. We had friends with it, but we really didn't know anything about it. A friend of ours convinced my husband to ride 150 miles, in July, in 100 plus degree heat, in 2 days. CRAZY! In those 2 days we met amazing people, life-long friends and learned what our friends were going through with this disease.

Fast forward to 2011. I started running into things, dragging my foot, I felt pins and needles in my legs, I had a hard time remembering things, my eyesight was getting progressively worse, and when I would get too hot, my legs would give out and I would fall. I made an appointment with a doctor and told him everything that was going on with my body. He told me what many doctors said in the span of over 2 years, that I was depressed and wanting attention. He said to take this or that pill and that I'd feel better, but I never did.

In 2013, I ended up at my doctor's office crying hysterically, and yelling "something is wrong with me and I'm not crazy!" He listened. He sent me to a neurologist, who sent me for an MRI. It was MS. I didn't cry or get scared or wonder, "why me?" We dove in head-first and got me moving in the right direction. My reason for not being scared was because of the MS ride. Because I had a village taking care of me.

Now 17 MS rides and 12 years from being diagnosed. I'm on medication that wasn't available when he started doing this ride. Because of the donations from Bike MS, we are one step closer to finding a cure. I'm so thankful for all the support.

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