



Cystic Fibrosis Scholarship Foundation
Helping young adults with CF pursue their dreams

WINTER 2014

From the President:

Welcome to our Winter Newsletter, the purpose of which is for our donors and friends to learn more about the young adults with cystic fibrosis who are being helped by the Foundation. For many of us, this has been a long, cold and snowy winter. The wonderful letters from our students should warm your spirits at the end of this difficult winter season.

For the 2013-2014 school year, we provided over 90 young adults with financial assistance, and although we at the Foundation are grateful for all of your support, it cannot begin to measure up to the appreciation and gratitude that these young adults feel for all your generosity. Since we have so many wonderful donors and each one of them is important to the success of this program, we would like to share with you just a few of the many wonderful letters we receive from our scholarship recipients. These letters highlight the importance CFSF has played in their lives, while also describing the difficulties many of them encounter in attempting to balance school, health care, and other activities. But you will also see that each one of them is cherishing their college experience and all that it has taught them, both academically and socially. We must remember that in most respects they are no different than any other college student, it's just that their road to college includes daily medications, therapies, and hospital stays. I know that our commitment to CFSF is making a difference in the lives of these young people, and allowing them to live the lives they deserve, something I see each time I read one of their letters.

We are currently in the process of sending out applications for the 2014-2015 scholarships. Forms are due back in late March and then the review process will begin. The awards will be announced in mid-April.

There is no doubt that the awareness of this program continues to grow each year. Our goal is to have every young adult with cystic fibrosis be aware of our program. Enjoy getting to know some of our scholarship winners through their letters on the following pages.

In order to better serve our donors, students and parents our website has been updated to include a chat room for students and parents to share information. Please visit our updated website for current news about CFSF.

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Semester Update from 2013-2014 Scholarship Recipients

Dear Friends of CFSS:

This past semester has been very eventful. It is not the kind of eventful that I encountered last year with a diagnosis of liver cancer and the anticipation a liver transplant. It is a wonder how different one year can be from the next. I would have never thought last year at this time that I would be running the New York City Marathon with my sister in November of 2013. Melissa, who donated 65% of her liver to me on February 18, 2013 asked me to run the New York City Marathon with her on Team Boomer. Team Boomer represents the Boomer Esiason Foundation. Honestly, I've had no desire in my entire life to run a marathon. However, when she asked me in late August to run the marathon with her, I knew that I had no reason not to. I have two legs and a new healthy liver, so I began training right away. I had much support from my former Cornerstone University cross country and track and field team as well as the support of family and friends as I took on this new goal. Along with running the marathon, many opportunities to share my story and my faith with the media came along. I was able to share my story several times with our Cornerstone University Herald newspaper. As well, I was able to share my story with various newspapers and I also had the opportunity to share my story on ABC Detroit Channel 7 as well as being interviewed by ESPN on the day of the marathon. I will admit at times the public attention was overwhelming.

Along with the training for the marathon and the publicity, I took on a fall semester of 17 credits. I had never done more than 13 credits at a time before the liver transplant. I not only was able to finish my fall semester with 17 credits, but I was able to finish strong with my first 4.0. Although running my first marathon and receiving my first 4.0 was exciting, I know those things did not define me or make me the kind of "happy" that lasts a lifetime. The times I was able to invest in my friendships at school were much more meaningful to me. When I was out of school last spring semester for the transplant, I was reminded of how much I really loved my education and treasured my friendships. I have a different perspective on life, and even though I am still human and get off track, I would have to say that last year's events will stay with me for life. These events have taught me that all of the success in the world does not come even close in comparison to the joy of love, sacrifice, and friendships.

This will probably be my last letter to you, as I am on track to graduate from Cornerstone University in May and so I want to say thanks so, so much for the part that you have had in making it possible for me to attend college and come to this point in my life. I plan to go on for further education in the field of occupational therapy next fall and am very excited to be doing an internship at the Veterans Health Care Facility in Grand Rapids this semester. God bless you for being a blessing to me.

Jami

Dear Friends of CFSS:

I am writing to give you an update and to thank you for helping make this semester possible for me. It has been a challenging yet rewarding time. Without your generous support this semester would have been even more challenging. About four weeks ago I had an exasperation of my cystic fibrosis. I have needed to increase my respiratory treatments and doctor visits. Fortunately, the disability office at the college has been advocating for me with my teachers, and they have all been understanding in allowing me additional time to make up my work on those days I have been sick. I am studying hard to catch up and plan on being ready to take my final tests in just a few weeks. The classes I have taken this semester in pursuit of my mechanical engineering degree are the following: engineering mechanics, electronics for engineers, fundamentals of music, multivariable calculus, elements of mechanics, and physics.

Again, thank you for your generous support in helping me reach my educational goals.

Rhett

Dear Friends of CFSF:

My first semester as a North Dakota State University Bison has been extremely prosperous. I learned an immense amount about my new major, made some changes to better care for my health, made some great new friends in North Dakota, and made some choices for myself in order to be happier. The switch to NDSU was a big change, but looking back I know it was the right choice for me right now.

My academics during my Fall semester at North Dakota State University went extremely well. I took fifteen credits this semester, many of them having to do with history. I transferred to NDSU in order to pursue a major in Public History. I always loved learning about history and recently discovered that I could turn my passion for history into a career in a museum or archive. Public history is all about interpreting history and bringing it to the public; sharing the history of a person or place with the people in a community. I took an introductory course in this major this semester and learned so much about what I can do in the future. I am incredibly excited for the future of my academics and career in public history! I am particularly interested in military history and hope to do many projects and much research on such in the future. I also took a public speaking course, geology, the history of fashion, and a wellness course this semester. I did well in all of these classes and got a 4.0 GPA this semester, which I am very proud of. The wellness course taught me about nutrition and fitness, which lead me to make a few changes in order to improve my health.

Learning about physical fitness in my wellness class prompted me to think about bettering my physical fitness. For me it is not about looking good or being thin, it is about making my lungs as strong as they can be in order to keep my Cystic Fibrosis at bay. I began exercising much more this past semester and it feels great. One choice I am particularly proud of is that I decided that this year I will RUN the Cystic Fibrosis Great Strides 5K in Fargo, North Dakota. I have always participated in the Great Strides walks before but I have never run one. This is a big goal for a young woman with CF but I am determined to do so and I began training on the first of the year. I have been doing great and am excited to continue getting stronger and gaining endurance. My health has been great overall throughout the last semester and I hope to keep it that way for many years to come.

Moving to Fargo was frightening because I knew very few people. Lucky for me, I tend to thrive in new places and situations and I made friends quickly. I have some great suitemates in my dorm where I am living this year. I also met some others from my dorm building and we have become so close over the last four months. I feel like I have another family in Fargo and I am so thankful to have met these fabulous people. I also met a very special guy who supports me in all that I do and encourages me to live life to the fullest. I hope to keep all of these friendships for the rest of my life, as each and every person I have met has had an important impact on my life in Fargo.

This semester I also made some big changes in order to make sure that I am living a life where I am happy. I ended a relationship of three and a half years this semester, which was very difficult but I am happy being my own person once again. I know I made the right choice for my life; regarding where I am now and where I want to be in the future. I am independent and happy to be so. A new love has emerged in my life and I am excited to see where that leads me in the future. Overall I am happier, healthy, and incredibly excited about my future and all it will bring me.

Once again, I sincerely thank you for helping me live my dream of furthering my education and learning about the world. With your help I am following my dream and becoming a powerful and independent young woman. My education is incredibly important to me and you are helping to make that much easier to pursue and achieve my goals. I will continue to work hard, live in the moment, and plan for the future in order to create the best life I can for myself. I am immensely grateful for your contribution and continued support.

Sarina

Dear Friends of CFSF:

Happy New Year! I hope 2014 is off to a good start for you.

This past fall semester has been the most difficult and the most rewarding of my entire life, thus far. August 23, I transferred into Covenant College on top of Lookout Mountain, Georgia. By September 6 I had to be hospitalized for acute pneumonia at Erlanger Hospital in Chattanooga, TN. It was a terrifying experience, being far from home and all familiarity. Yet, the community of my small Christian college surrounded me and took care of me while I was ill. During it all, I was able to keep up with school by reading my assigned books and keeping in close contact with my professors. They were very kind to work with me personally and to give me deadline extensions. I returned to the campus three weeks later and resumed my classes as well as work-study in the Office of Records.

Then, round two. I began to feel that all-too-familiar ache in my right lung and shortness of breath as I walked to and from classes. Some nights I would wake up with extreme fevers followed by the most violent chills I've ever experienced. I knew something was very wrong, so once again I made it to the ER. There I was told that I had another bout of pneumonia, this time less severe. It would require another 2-3 weeks of hospitalization. The news broke me. I had just escaped Erlanger, was catching up on the work I had missed, and was struggling to transition back into college life. How could I do it all over again? I remember telling myself, "Just take it one day at a time. That's all you can do". So, I did. I admitted myself to the hospital once again.

This time, Dr. Ledbetter and Dr. Green made a significant discovery. Cultures proved that I had been growing a severe case of Mycobacterium Avium Complex (MAC) which had been the cause of my prolonged sickness. My doctors gave me the choice of whether or not we would treat it. The medications for treating MAC came with a long list of side effects and were to be administered over the course of a year or longer. I agreed to try the medication and it began to work within a week. I was released and returned to school. Since then, I have felt better than I did in August when I first arrived at Covenant.

Fall semester did not go as planned. It was full of unwanted surprises and twists. I even changed my major from Business to English, realizing that my interests had evolved from management to communication skills. I want to be able to write, speak, and analyze information for a company or non-profit organization someday; this is my new educational route. I could not be happier with my decision.

In the end, I made the Dean's List with two A's and three B's. This is not my normal, but it is reflective of my poor health this semester. Next semester, I plan to improve my GPA as well as become more involved with my college's incredible community life. Hopefully, the spring will be hospital-free! Thank you dearly for supporting me in my endeavors. The Tim Dangel Memorial Scholarship has been a necessary factor in my academic success.

Caroline