



The Mother Road  
Ride

presented by



# Charlotte | my MS story

diagnosed 2014

Having a child diagnosed with MS would be a journey that no parent would dream of choosing. Having a child diagnosed with MS and having an aggressive disease load then to get diagnosed myself is a whole different ball game.

My daughter, Amanda, was misdiagnosed at the age of 13. It was 3 years without treatment that caused a snowball effect ramping up an angry immune system before she received her correct diagnosis of MS. Being her primary care giver for the following 5 years was a joy I never thought possible. It was a time filled with laughter and tears, highs and lows, mobility and complete paralysis. While she was hospitalized at the beginning of 2013 for a relapse that sent her to inpatient therapy to learn how to live without the use of the left side of her body, I began to have strange symptoms myself. I tried to dismiss what I knew in my heart to be MS related, saying it was only stress and focused instead on Amanda.

Amanda was sent home and eventually regained use of what was paralyzed, graduated college, and moved to Texas for a 3 month internship. It was while she was gone that I continued to have different symptoms and realized it was more than just stress. I knew I had to say something but was too afraid of losing my job that I waited as long as I could before seeking medical help.

In December 2013, I made an appointment with a new family doctor. I told him what was going on and that I thought I either had MS or a brain tumor. He assured me that he would help me get to the bottom of my symptoms. He ordered a brain MRI right away and called me with the results as soon as they were posted. He referred me to a neurologist and I was amazed at how my experience mirrored Amanda's. The neurologist proceeded to tell me that he had no idea what was wrong and that I should just wait and see. Having seen firsthand what the "wait and see" program does to a person with untreated MS, I called to get a referral to the MS Center of Excellence where Amanda goes. I knew that if anyone could get to the bottom of a diagnosis, they could.

In June 2014, I received my diagnosis of MS and a treatment plan. I know firsthand the good, the bad, and the ugly of MS being a parent and care giver for a child with MS. However, I count it as an amazing blessing that I have the opportunity to have been trained and prepared in advance for such a journey. I have been left with very big shoes to try to fill and a built in support system. It is a beautiful thing to look back and see how everything worked out, from knowing not to trust the first wrong answer, to knowing how to give injections, to knowing the medicines and treatments, to have MS friends and the Society, to knowing that I can do this. I've watched the strongest person I know walk the path with such grace and strength and I knew I couldn't do any less.



bike to  
create a world  
free of MS