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Ann Marie Gillie

Canadian Advocate for Epilepsy, Canada

An international voice for Epilepsy

Being diagnosed with Epilepsy at the age of two and half years definitely created several obstacles for myself and my family, but being the stubborn as well as positive individual that I am, I was able to get through it; I actually beat epilepsy. On December 03, 2002 my life was changed forever, I underwent neurosurgery at University of Alberta Hospital in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. My surgery was called Left Selective Amygdalohippocampectomy and the procedure was a 100% success. I had six grand mal seizures two days before my surgery and who knew that those would be my last. I have been off all medications now for over 11 years and that too is an amazing accomplishment and feeling. My history with epilepsy was like a roller coaster, on meds, off meds, side effects, seizures, no seizures; it was a never ending hurdles, but I stayed focused and survived it. I was never in special need of classes; I played sports and was an individual with an infectious personality, so I am regularly told. Since my surgery in 2002, I have accomplished some amazing tasks and ones I would never have thought possible. I have published two books have had several articles published in papers and magazines, as well as international medical sites like SNI (Surgical Neurology International) and CURE. My number one goal is to educate others around the world, but not from a professional side of things but from someone that has lived it, that understands the obstacles others go through that live with epilepsy. From my understanding, there are not a lot of individuals that speak on the topic of epilepsy, locally or internationally and I want to change that. I have been a people's person for my whole life and I feel that there was a reason I am here today speaking about my story. Epilepsy needs to be talked about and I am the one to do that. I want to be that voice for epilepsy.

Biography

Ann Marie Gillie was asked in 2012 to be a Canadian Advocate for Epilepsy and with her passion and drive for motivating others; her role has taken her internationally to speak. She works as an Education Assistant for Parkland County School Division in Alberta, Canada, where her role is working primarily with students who suffer from ADHD/ADD/ODD and other behaviour disorders. She is also a published author ("If Walls Could Talk and Let's Talk About Epilepsy") and has had several articles published in regards to her personal experience with epilepsy and surgery. Her topics of discussion at conferences and seminars are, but not limited to surgery (Left Selective Amygdalohippocampectomy), women and epilepsy, sex and seizures and her books. She is passionate about helping others that struggle with the disorder and her goal is to help others internationally, both professionals in the field and those living with the disorder.

pace_ann@yahoo.ca

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