

Jack Griffith

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Jack's Story

Hello, my name is Jack Griffith.

In July 2011, at the age of 52, I first noticed symptoms such as limping and an inability to run. Referred to a neurologist, they performed Electromyography tests which measure electrical activity and conductivity of your muscles. When completed, the doctor told me, with a shocked look on his face, it appears I have "severe spinal damage". Very quickly I was referred to Dr. Kimberly Goslin and the implication was clear. This may be ALS. I took about 6 months of tests and consideration before I received confirmation.



A rush of thoughts, concerns and uncertainty lasted for some time. How fast would the disease overtake me? The average of 3-5 years stuck in my mind and lit a fire to take action. We considered changes in our home, impact on our finances, life sustaining instructions. Over time, I discovered that the progress of the disease was slower than "normal". This gave me some relief and gratitude. That is what I try to focus on a day to day basis. Gratitude that each day is the best day for the rest of my life, gratitude that I've been able to watch my children grow into young adults, and gratitude that I've been able to continue to work.

How Funds Help Us Directly

Research for ALS is clearly an important ongoing effort that requires a great deal of funds. This is the hope for current and future persons with ALS (PALS). In addition, the money raised by the Walk to Defeat goes immediately to help the quality of life for the PALS such as myself.

* The loan closet works to provide necessary wheelchairs, walkers or other medical equipment to those that need it immediately. That way the PALS can learn and adapt to the equipment before they really need it and while awaiting insurance processes to complete.

* Multi-disciplinary clinics help PALS and providers to solve problems that are experienced by the PALS. Every 3-4 months I meet with 8-10 specialists to evaluate my condition and determine if I, or the provider, need to take some action.

* Specialists in these clinics include physical and occupational therapists, a speech/language pathologist, a nutritionist, a respiratory therapist, a social worker, as well as nurses and doctor.

* Getting all of these specialists and the PALS together for these sessions rather than each of us having to make individual appointments provides an keen sense of where I'm

at for me, my family and for the providers.

* These clinics provide proactive consideration of what I will likely need in equipment, therapy, and actions we all can take before the next clinic to help improve quality of life before a disability overtakes me further.

* These clinic sessions, I've discovered, are not enjoyed by all ALS Chapters and are the result of extremely hard work and design by the Providence ALS Clinic and the Oregon and SW Washington chapter of the ALS Association.

* I'm extremely grateful for the shroud of angelic compassion provided by the Oregon and SW Washington Chapter of the ALS Association led by Lance Christian as well as the Providence ALS Center teams led by Dr. Kimberly Goslin.

Without the funds raised by the Walk to Defeat ALS, I would certainly be lost in a sea of adversity. My disabilities would consume my energy leaving none for my family, work or enjoyment of life.

Your Immediate Impact is Possible

Thank you for helping me reach my Walk to Defeat ALS fundraising goal! This is an exciting opportunity for us to work together to support those affected by Lou Gehrig's Disease and to spread awareness of the urgency to find treatments and a cure.

Please consider walking with me or sponsoring me. With your help, we will be able to make a difference in the lives of people affected by this disease. I encourage you get your friends, family, neighbors and coworkers involved!

Why We Need Your Help

Often referred to as Lou Gehrig's Disease, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) is a progressive, fatal neuromuscular disease that slowly robs the body of its ability to walk, speak, swallow and breathe. The life expectancy of an ALS patient averages 2 to 5 years from the time of diagnosis.

Every 90 minutes a person in this country is diagnosed with ALS and every 90 minutes another person will lose their battle against this disease. ALS occurs throughout the world with no racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic boundaries.

This crippling disease can strike anyone. Presently there is no known cause of the disease though support is bringing researchers closer to an answer. In the mean time it costs an average of \$200,000 a year to provide the care ALS patients need. Help make a difference and donate or join a walk today.

. **Jack Griffith** • July 11, 2019