

# EVERYDAY MATTERS

## “Everyday Matters” Brings Unique Resources to People Affected by Multiple Sclerosis

*MS Community to Follow Journey of Five Americans with MS  
Using Positive Psychology to Achieve a Personal Goal*

**NEW YORK, NY, August 2, 2012** – Five people living with multiple sclerosis (MS) have been selected from nearly 1,200 entries to receive one-on-one support as they set out to overcome a challenge that affects their everyday life. Their journeys will be chronicled as part of *Everyday Matters*, a first-of-its kind program that draws on practical and scientific applications of positive psychology to engage and inspire those living with or affected by MS.

Positive psychology is the scientific study of what makes people thrive. Research in this field has found a strong connection between an individual’s mindset, social support system, and well-being. Using positive psychology, these individuals will address key aspects of their lives: wellness, work/education, relationships, family, and empowerment. These five topics represent aspects of life that matter most to the MS community, according to a June 2012 poll by the National MS Society.

“We’ve only just launched and are already thrilled by the level of interest *Everyday Matters* has received from the community,” said National MS Society President and CEO Cyndi Zagieboylo. “This interest underscores the desire people have to define how they want to live their lives, addressing aspects that are most central to who they are as individuals, rather than being defined by their MS.”

Guiding *Everyday Matters* is renowned positive psychology expert **Shawn Achor**, author of the bestselling book, *The Happiness Advantage*. “Our hope is to empower the MS community through simple techniques and inspiring stories,” said Shawn. “Each of these individuals brings their own background, experience and perspective to the program. We can all learn from them as they practice new strategies for approaching unique yet relatable goals.”

The following individuals will help to illustrate how positive psychology can help make a difference in the everyday lives of people living with MS:

- **Sallie Harrison** – Sallie is a fourth-grade teacher and mother of three from rural Oklahoma, who was diagnosed with MS in 2011 after years of unexplained symptoms. Sallie teaches children how to serve their community and make a difference in the world, but she worries that MS may compromise her ability to continue her career as a teacher.
- **Brenda Martin** – After single mom Brenda was diagnosed with MS in 2010, she made lifestyle changes and lost 100 pounds. Now she is turning the same drive toward meeting someone new, although, as she puts it, “the idea of actually dating scares me to death!”
- **Jim Stoneberger** – When Jim, a hard-working professional, husband and father from Maryland, was diagnosed with MS in 2010 his first question was, “How will this change who

I am?” While he’s had to adjust in some ways, Jim is learning to better manage his time and physical capabilities in order to spend more valuable time with his family – three children and a wife of 16 years.

- **Connie Kirchner** – Connie says her biggest obstacle is feeling good about herself while being in a wheelchair. But her idea is to help herself – and other women – learn how to dress in wheelchair-appropriate fashions, which would make her feel her life has a purpose.
- **Elizabeth Pontillo** – Just days before her 25th birthday, Elizabeth found out she has MS. She now wonders if the “full life with all of the trimmings” that she had planned will be possible, given her fatigue and other symptoms.

**Michelle Clos**, a life coach certified by the International Coach Federation who is living with MS, has personally benefited from positive psychology and will work hand-in-hand with these individuals through personalized coaching sessions designed with their unique goals in mind.

“I know firsthand that ‘staying positive’ can become that much more challenging after being diagnosed with a chronic and unpredictable disease like MS,” said Michelle. “Yet, I also know that it is possible. I have so much confidence in these five individuals and look forward to working with them each week toward achieving their personal goals, and showing the entire MS community what we can accomplish.”

Each participant’s journey is being chronicled in a video series produced by **Kristen Adams**, an Emmy-award winning producer living with MS, as well as through personal text, video, and photo journals showcased on [www.everydayMSmatters.org](http://www.everydayMSmatters.org). The site also offers toolkits and other resources related to positive psychology, wellness, work/education, relationships, family, and empowerment.

*Everyday Matters* is a joint program developed by the National MS Society and Genzyme, a Sanofi Company.

### **About Multiple Sclerosis**

Multiple sclerosis, an unpredictable, often disabling disease of the central nervous system, interrupts the flow of information within the brain and between the brain and the body. Every hour in the United States, someone is newly diagnosed with the disease. Symptoms range from numbness and tingling to blindness and paralysis. The progress, severity and specific symptoms of MS in any one person cannot yet be predicted, but advances in research and treatment are moving us closer to a world free of MS. Most people with MS are diagnosed between the ages of 20 and 50, with more than twice as many women as men being diagnosed with the disease. MS affects more than 400,000 people in the U.S. and 2.1 million worldwide.

### **About the National Multiple Sclerosis Society**

MS stops people from moving. The National MS Society exists to make sure it doesn’t. We help each person address the challenges of living with MS. Last year alone, through our national office and 50-state network of chapters, we devoted \$164 million to programs that enhanced more than one million lives. To move us closer to a world free of MS, the Society also invested

\$40 million to support more than 325 new and ongoing research projects around the world. We are people who want to do something about MS now. Give what you know at [www.MSconnection.org](http://www.MSconnection.org).

**About Genzyme, a Sanofi Company**

Genzyme has pioneered the development and delivery of transformative therapies for patients affected by rare and debilitating diseases for over 30 years. We accomplish our goals through world-class research and with the compassion and commitment of our employees. With a focus on rare diseases and multiple sclerosis, we are dedicated to making a positive impact on the lives of the patients and families we serve. That goal guides and inspires us every day.

Genzyme's portfolio of transformative therapies, which are marketed in countries around the world, represents groundbreaking and life-saving advances in medicine. As a Sanofi company, Genzyme benefits from the reach and resources of one of the world's largest pharmaceutical companies, with a shared commitment to improving the lives of patients. Learn more at [www.genzyme.com](http://www.genzyme.com).

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