

Luke's Story

I grew up in Forest/Goode graduating from Jefferson Forest HS in 2000 with a track and field scholarship to Wake Forest University. Upon graduating from Wake Forest in 2004, I moved to the Washington DC metro area with a degree in Management Information Systems. While in DC I earned my master's degree (also in MIS) from George Washington University. I was a software consultant working with the intelligence community and various government agencies. In my off time I enjoyed running, working out and exploring all of the sights of the DC area.

In mid-2010, I began having severe headaches which were diagnosed as migraines. In March of 2011 I decided to see an optometrist just in case my eyesight was contributing to the headaches, during the exam he noticed something in my eyes that concerned him and referred me to a neurologist. On the 17th of March, 2011, which just happens to be my birthday, I saw the neurologist who suggested I have an MRI just as a precaution. Upon reading the MRI, he discovered a Central Neurocytoma, a very rare benign brain tumor and surgery was scheduled. During surgery I suffered an Ischemic event (stroke) which cannot be explained. After many months of rehab re-learning to walk, talk and a multitude of other life skills, I was able to come home. The remainder of 2011 and 2012 was spent in outpatient rehab including 6 weeks at Woodrow Wilson Rehab Center in Fishersville where I learned to drive again using a left foot accelerator. About a year ago I acquired a Bioness system, which is a functional electrical stimulation device to control foot drop. The Bioness has allowed me to get rid of the brace that I left the hospital with.

Although my life has changed in so many ways since that day in March of 2011 and my brain injury prevents me from returning to my previous life, I feel fortunate to be alive and am thankful for all of the good in my life today. Especially the folks at the YMCA, United Way of Central Virginia where I volunteer and all of the members of the Brain Injury Support Group who have helped me in my recovery. But most importantly I am thankful for my family and friends who have been by my side providing love and support unconditionally throughout this journey.