BRAINWAVES
HYDROCEPHALUS
CANADA
Bridging Research, Advocacy and Innovation
With Awareness Education & Support

Meet Meaghan

Personal Story

I've always loved wrestling; I love the passion and the strength behind every wrestling move. One day I decided to take my nephew to a wrestling show. That day changed my life forever. I was rushed unconscious to the hospital and had an MRI per-formed immediately. Through the MRI, I was diagnosed with hydrocephalus.

You see, I had been experiencing dizzy spells and all kinds of headaches since I was 20 years old. Doctors never understood my pain and neither did my family. I would try to put it into words, but my message never got across. "I'm struggling with something internally and I can't figure out what it is" I would say, or "I'm sensing some kind of unstable balance and unexplainable head pain". My first surgery was immediately after I passed out. It was horrifying, but truthfully there was no time to panic. The doctors said it had to be done right away. But I remember being terrified, it was the hardest experience I'd been through in my early adult life.

Up until now, I've had nine surgeries and fortunately they do not scare me anymore. Oddly enough, I get a sigh of relief knowing that doctors are finally understanding and listening to my struggle. I tell myself "this is for the better, something is being done" Keep in mind, I am the youngest of five children, and no one could relate to my pain, not even my twin sister who was also diagnosed with hydrocephalus. Having been born first, she seemed like she did not suffer similar symptoms as I. She has only had two surgeries and is continuing her everyday life without any interruptions. To my understanding, I believe we're the only set of twins born with hydrocephalus in Canada. You'd think having a twin sister facing similar hardships would make it easier on you, but the only source of motivation and comfort I get is from my dogs.

> *"You'd think having a twin sister facing similar hardships would make it easier on yourself, but the only source of motivation I get is from my dogs."*

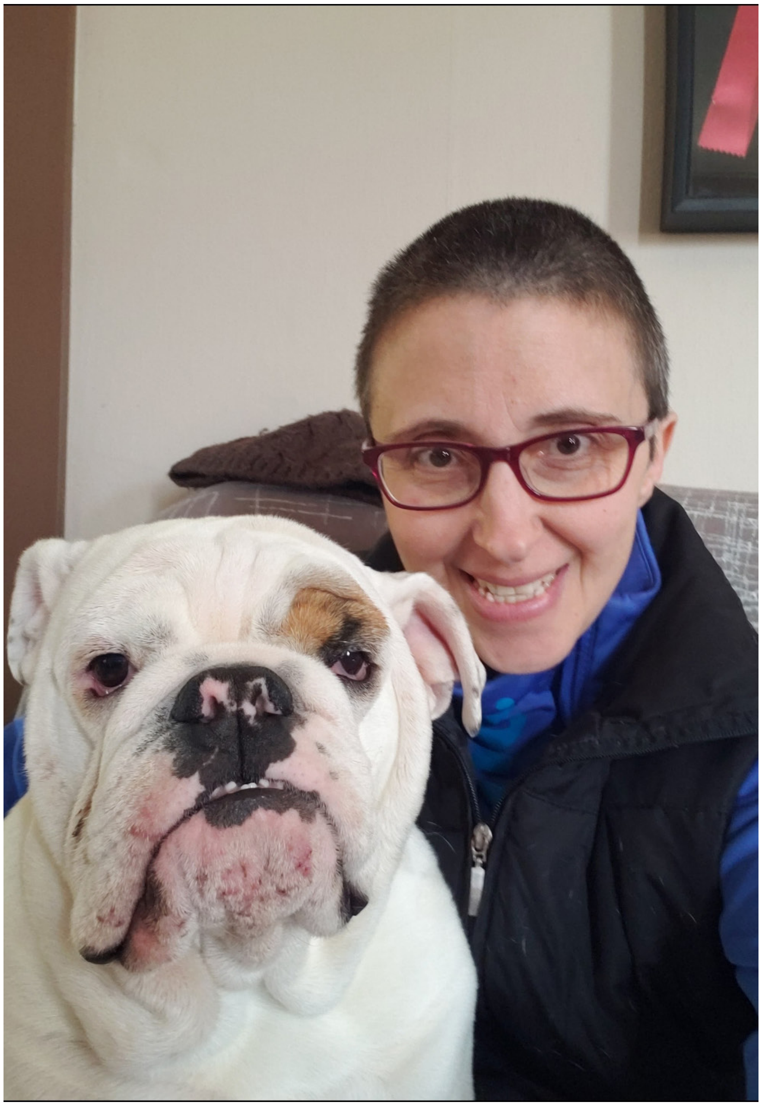
I've been a dog breeder for many years and they keep me going. I enjoy breeding dogs because nothing is more satisfying than raising puppies and seeing them with their new owners and how happy they are. Lots of work goes into raising a litter. Finding the best homes to become apart of my family is amazing. My dogs are my companionship, my friends, my motivation, my happiness, they give me the daily inspiration to stay positive and strong.

I would've never thought that I would be gifted with Louie, an English bulldog. Louie was born with some difficulties and

I was very concerned he would not survive. I had to hand him over to a vet to nurture and get him stronger as he was unable to suckle off mom. Once he was 7 weeks old, I took him to several specialists, including a neurologist where he was diagnosed with hydrocephalus. Louie currently has nerve damage on the left side of his face, and his left eye has 5% tears. Regardless, he is one of the happiest dogs around me. Louie's story is one that really shined some light on my life with hydrocephalus. He was meant to be with me because no one else would understand his struggle like I did.

I think the key to battling hydrocephalus and continuing a healthy daily life is to find something that you're passionate about and to pour your heart and time into it. This passion should be a source of positive motivation and energy. Staying positive is something we should be willing to do to enrich our lives and continue moving forward with hydrocephalus. I've realized establishing a relationship of positive tolerance with myself and this condition will help me lead the most nor-mal life possible.

However, having discovered this condition when I was diagnosed, I do wish there was greater outreach and awareness of it. Especially, after symptoms worsen, your family and friends don't understand your struggles because of the lack of awareness there is. I wish for the hydrocephalus community to receive the correct acknowledgement, and that will only happen if those in their surroundings are aware and informed about hydrocephalus. With hydrocephalus, there is often no outward signs, it is an inward condition. I feel like it's hard for us to feel accommodated or understood. I'm thankful for Hydrocephalus Canada for its effort to spread awareness while also keeping its members informed and supported. From the moment I came across Hydrocephalus Canada, I've felt that an organization dedicated to us is trying to make a difference. It's great to know that someday I won't have to explain what hydrocephalus is, as people will be informed enough about it.



Hydrocephalus Canada

**We are the voice of
Canadians living with hydrocephalus.**

Every day we strive to empower those impacted by
the condition to experience the best life possible.

We do this by establishing environments that
protect, support and enhance the lives
of those living with, or at risk of
developing, hydrocephalus.

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