

# Member of the Month

• November 2015 •



**Lisa Dasis**

A year ago this month, I made the best decision of my life and joined the Lift. I have a disease called Multiple Sclerosis (MS), which causes a host of symptoms from the head to the toe. Many of us living with MS have very similar symptoms, although the degree of which we suffer with these differ from person to person depending on where and how many lesions that are present. With some individuals MS is not as noticeable from outward appearance. They are able to walk without assisted devices and hold down a full time job; Others live in a wheelchair and require assistance for all their daily needs. I tell you all this to give you some idea of the different degrees of which MS affects us all. Many call it a snowflake disease because each one's symptoms are different.

For me, my major complaints are muscle weakness, fatigue, balance issues, problems with coordination, muscle spasms, pain, and sleep issues. Extreme heat and cold can really cause my disease to relapse causing additional problems. Being a nurse, I realized that medication to treat MS and the symptoms associated with it could only bring me so far. It was time to think outside the box and look for other things to help improve my condition. Knowing the benefits of exercise, the Lift became the answer to my prayers. Initially, I thought hitting the exercise equipment was what I needed, only to find that I was limited by muscle fatigue and getting hot while exercising increased my symptoms. It became clear to change strategy and enter into the aquatic classes.

Not long after starting into this type of exercise, which I was attending twice a week, an improvement in my condition started to become apparent. I continued to add additional days, and now I am attending classes 5 days a week. It varies from gentle joints, water dance, to all out fat burners. It is common to find myself staying for two different types of classes. Starting this routine since the beginning of the year, my overall health has improved dramatically. With each class, the instructors provide us with movements which are defined and calculated to provide us with ultimate muscle strength all over the body, balancing skills, and coordination with my movements. I have been taught not only to walk correctly, but to move with precision which has improved my gate and posture that is responsible for decreased number of falls from walking. I am now even able to ride a bicycle with my grandchildren.

Other benefits from aquatic exercise include decreased pain, muscle spasms, tremors, fatigue, improved sleep at night, and socialization with others who are suffering from diseases of their own. Friendships have been formed along with concern for others who have been absent for a period of time from class. The instructors are extremely knowledgeable about the body and provide us with direction in which to execute each exercise, pushing us to give 100% without injuring ourselves. Every day when I have completed a class, I feel amazing with what I have accomplished and have the energy to complete my tasks at hand for the day.

I saw my MS Specialist this past July and he was extremely pleased at how well I was doing. He recognized the strength gained and my ability to perform certain balance exercises for him. He stated that aquatic therapy/exercise is the best type of exercise out there for so many of us. There is no fear of falling or injury by participation and the results have provided me a quality of life that I didn't know I could regain.

The first day of walking into the Lift, I saw the rock climbing wall and told myself that I would never be able to accomplish this. Now each day when I enter into the pool area, I see that wall and realize that climbing that wall is no longer a pipe dream. One of my instructors became aware of this dream and steadily encouraged me to take the plunge. She set up the date for me to take on my ultimate goal, which I have become extremely thankful for. On Wednesday, November 11th, 11 months after recognizing that I wanted to do this, it finally became a reality. I climbed to the top of the wall on my first try and proudly rang the bell.

I just want to thank the Lift and all my instructors and employees for their support and encouragement in making my dream become a reality.

