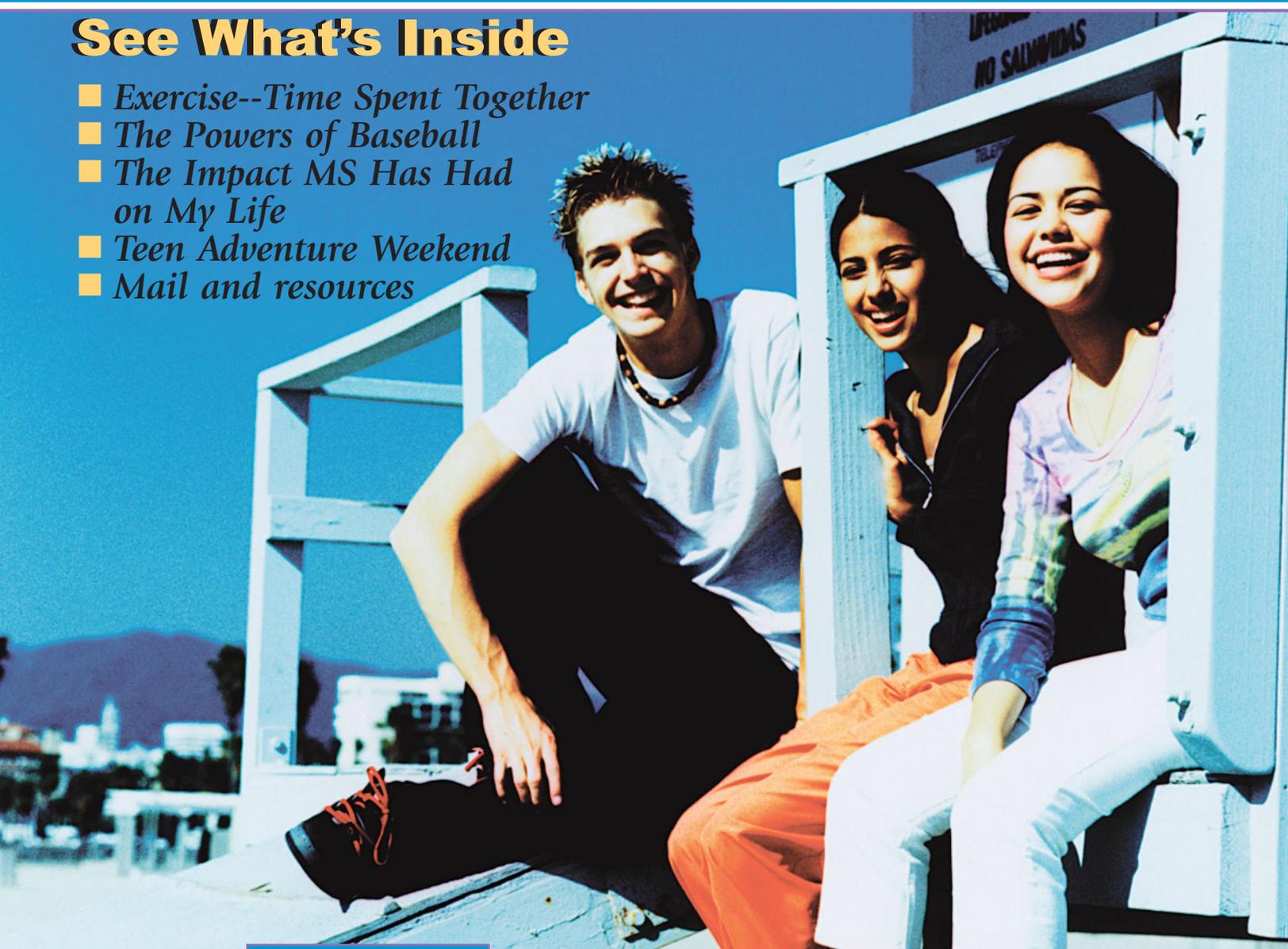


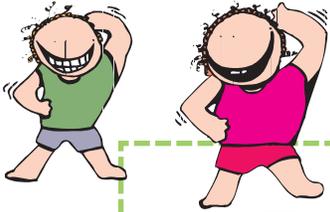
# Teens Speak Out

## See What's Inside

- *Exercise--Time Spent Together*
- *The Powers of Baseball*
- *The Impact MS Has Had on My Life*
- *Teen Adventure Weekend*
- *Mail and resources*



*teen*  
***insideMS***



## Exercise—time spent together

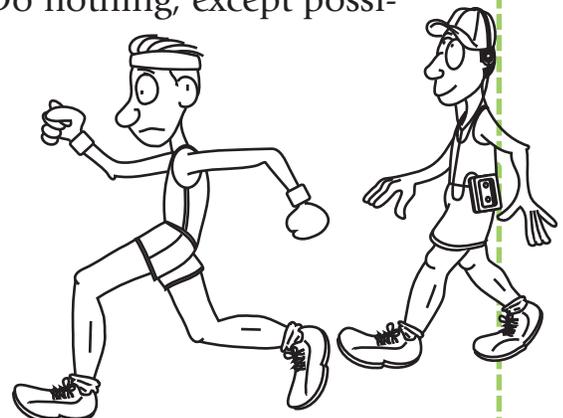
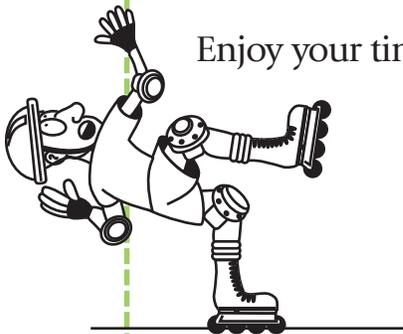
*"We hear the message everywhere: regular, moderate physical exercise is good for body, mind, and spirit."*

—Exercise as Part of Everyday Life

It can be traditional aerobics, a Tai Chi or Yoga class you take together, gardening, housework (yes, that is exercise) or a simple game of catch (read Kevin's story on our next page). A few minutes a week can form a bond that can last a lifetime with your parent. Here are some strategies excerpted from "Exercise as Part of Everyday Life":

- Ask your parent what kind of exercise the doctor recommends.
- Plan ahead. If fatigue is a problem, make sure your mom or dad takes a 15-minute nap a few hours before.
- Talk to your parent about the time of the day when he/she is least tired and schedule your activity for that time.
- Keep cool. This is wise for everyone. In warm weather, this could include avoiding outdoor activities between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.
- Carry cold drinks in insulated containers that attach comfortably to a belt, waist-pack, backpack, or shoulder strap.
- Remember to do a cool down after the activity. Lie or sit with your eyes closed and breathe slowly and deeply. Do nothing, except possibly listen to soothing music or talk.

Enjoy your time together.





# The powers of baseball

By Kevin Murphy



The velocity at which it comes to my hands is engrossing. The warm sun beats down on our faces as my arm extends to return the white sphere to the point it originated from. In a moment, my Dad is in the same position, and reacts in kind. His delivery is slightly less deliberate, and he takes his time to send the ball in its revolving flight. The flow of his body is more natural, and mine is more automatic. He methodically presents the ball back in my hands in the most accurate fashion possible. In response, I reach back and throw as hard as I can, determined for the ball to pass the distance between us in the least amount of time, regardless of the precision involved. He, being the elder, has responsibilities in his life, and concerns himself with the quality in which he completes his daily tasks. I, the unconcerned youth, merely want everything done lightning fast, with no fear for the outcome. This is indicative of our lifestyles, and he showed me this, among other life lessons, through the wonders of baseball.

It had not taken much to get me outside. "Come on, let's go", he exclaimed, and I knew just what he meant. I raced up the stairs to grab the pair of weathered, beaten, leather gloves, and the laced ball. My father had his cap on as he met me at the stairs, and together we piled out of the narrow doorway. Catch was never about playing baseball for my father and me. Catch

meant we would talk. No matter what it was, catch excited conversation. Somehow, the passing of the ball represented the open exchange we had with one another during those times. Catch has taught me many things, and none of them about baseball.

Catch gave me a sense of direction. It kept my attention. When speaking to a young child, there are only so many things you can do to keep them there. And many times when the topics got rough, throughout the exchange, I felt the need to break down and cry, just stop, stop everything and cry, but the ball kept coming. The ball gave me focus, it provided me a reason to keep going. The ball may have flown back and forth, but this exchange was rather one sided. He showed me how to throw a knuckleball, where to put the perfect pitch, and when to "get tough." I learned about girls, happiness, friendship, maturing as an individual, growing up, and becoming a better person.

These days, my father's physical condition may impair our ability to go out and complete the actual activity of playing catch. However the quality of conversation we once found in catch is in our everyday life. The MS that currently affects him may prevent him from spending too much time outside in the heat, but catch has done its job. The attachment of the ball to the talking is no longer needed. Now, I can just sit down, and have an honest conversation with my father. My father's physical limitations do not limit our honesty. We have overcome that.

These days, our schedules may conflict, we may never have the time, and catch may seem juvenile, but whenever I get confused, or worried, I get the itch to reach for the leather and lace.



**Catch has taught me many things, and none of them about baseball.**

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*One of the 2004 Scholarship winners, Kevin will attend the Rochester Insitute of Technology where he will study computer engineering.*



# The Impact MS Has Had On My Life

By Cody Endres

*“There will be many ups and downs to deal with. I believe that my mother's MS has adequately prepared me to motivate myself and to succeed in life.”*



My mother's MS has taught me many valuable life lessons that I can keep with me. On the other hand, my mother's MS has taught me that there are some things in life that you just cannot control. All, both good and bad, have helped me to stay motivated and achieve my goals.

My mom has been disabled with MS since I was 5. It hurts me to say this, but I

do not ever remember her being able to walk normally.

Growing up and watching MS take such a toll on her body is devastating. However, the pain of observing all of this has taught me courage, strength, responsibility, dependability, compas-

sion, caring, and thoughtfulness just to name a few. I've learned that we just have to take things day by day and roll with the punches.

Even though my mother has MS, she has been the best mother I could have asked for. Her passionate caring has aided me in unimaginable ways. She has always focused all of her energy on me and keeping life as normal as possible. For this I am eternally grateful. Although MS has affected her physical abilities, her courage and strength have helped her strive to find different ways in which to do things. I greatly admire her for this fact. Other kids admire sports heroes or Hollywood superstars, but my role model has always been my mom.

The most valuable thing I've learned is that material things and physical abilities are not the most important things in life. MS has shown me that we should be happy for what our life is and what things we can

accomplish. You have to work around problems. There will be many ups and downs to deal with. I believe that my mother's MS has adequately prepared me to motivate myself and to succeed in life.

## Caring

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*One of the 2004 Scholarship winners, Cody will attend Viterbo University to study psychology.*



*"It's great spending time with kids like me."*  
—Teen Adventure Weekend participant

Can you imagine what it must be like to be a teenager living with a chronic disease? You feel different from everyone else. Your activities and living arrangements may be altered. Your self-esteem and self-confidence is affected. You feel isolated and alone.

Now imagine being that same teenager spending time with other teens also living with a chronic disease. For the time you spend together, you're not different, you have no limitations; you belong.

Teen Adventure Weekend, sponsored by The National Pediatric MS Center at Stony Brook University Hospital, was held in Rhode Island July 16-19. Guided by recreational therapy professionals from Access2Adventure, 11 teens, all with MS, kayaked and sailed, worked the high and low ropes courses, and took part in a drumming circle.

For more information about the National Pediatric MS Center and its programs, log on to [www.pediatricmscenter.org](http://www.pediatricmscenter.org).

## mail

**A message from Dr. Lauren Krupp, director of the National Pediatric MS Center at Stony Brook, New York:**

**"MS is typically diagnosed in adults, but children as young as two have developed it. In our center, 95% of the children and teens with MS do not have a parent with MS. It is critically important for adults with MS not to think that their children are at risk.**

**"It is just as vital for young adults who have a parent with MS not to think that they are at risk. Genetics plays a very small role in making a person susceptible to MS.**

**"Pediatric MS is rare. So far, we have evaluated 55 patients younger than 17. Thirty have clinically definite MS."**

"I am 15 years old and my dad has had MS for a while now. It's been very difficult growing up with this. He is a police officer and although he has a strong heart and personality, he's weak on the outside. He has used a cane and now uses an arm brace daily to keep him balanced. He also uses a scooter when we go places. Every day it seems like the disease gets worse. My mother and I started a team for the MS Walk, and along with family and friends have participated in it for the past couple of years.

I recently found the *Teen InsideMS* issues on the Internet. I think it's an amazing idea for teens to share their stories and how they feel in these articles but was also wondering if there's somewhere teens can talk one on one, through e-mails or letters, and possibly build friendships and discuss our feelings. I really feel like I have nobody to talk to because my friends have no idea what it's like. It really hurts to keep it inside."

—Heather

## Resources

### Connect with others

- **MS World**—the Society's collaborative partner and official site for chats and message boards. Includes sessions for teens. [www.msworld.org](http://www.msworld.org)
- **“Let’s Talk MS—For Teens”**  
A web site especially for teens, created by the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada, Manitoba Division. [www.msforteens.com](http://www.msforteens.com)
- **PEN PALS**—Directory of kids and teens, age 8-18, who would like to exchange letters or e-mails with each other.

To enroll and receive the directory, call: 1-800-493-9255; E-mail: [amber.stalker@mam.nmss.org](mailto:amber.stalker@mam.nmss.org); or write: National MS Society, Central New England Chapter, 20 Commerce Park North, Suite 108, Bedford, NH 03110. Attn: Amber Stalker

- **“Young Persons with MS: A Network for Families with a Child or Teen with MS**  
Toll free: 1-866-KIDS W MS (1-866-543-7967)  
[www.nationalmssociety.org/peds\\_network.asp](http://www.nationalmssociety.org/peds_network.asp)  
E-mail: [childhoodms@nmss.org](mailto:childhoodms@nmss.org).
- Find out about teen programs at your chapter.  
[www.nationalmssociety.org/mycommunity/index.asp](http://www.nationalmssociety.org/mycommunity/index.asp)

“I am 17 and was diagnosed with MS in January of this year. I have searched many sites looking for someone my own age to relate to but was unsuccessful. I love that you have added something about a teen having MS rather than teens whose parents have it. Hearing only about older people having MS makes us younger people feel alone. I think it is great!  
Thank you so much!

—Megan

“My mom was diagnosed with MS when I was only 10 or 12 years old. She's confined to bed now. It's hard for me, but at times it brings me great joy that she's still here, and that she's still fighting everyday. This helps me feel stronger to fight whatever obstacles that gets in my way. My mother is my stronghold. I'm always hoping that they will find a cure soon to help my mother. Thanks for letting me share my story.”

—S. Craven

## **Talk to us and other teens about MS!**

**Send us your letters, stories, poetry, photos and art. E-mail: [editor@nmss.org](mailto:editor@nmss.org). Mail to: Teen InsideMS, National MS Society, 733 Third Avenue, NY 10017-3288.**

**Please send artwork (photographs, cartoons, drawings, or pictures) via email or on a CD (jpeg format). We cannot return material or be responsible for original artwork, so please send your work this way. We will notify you if your work is going to be published.**

**Please include your age, name, and address or e-mail address. We will not release this to anyone. (If you are under 18, we may need a form signed by a parent or guardian.)**



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