

BOBBIE ECHARD

DIAGNOSED IN 2013 // MY MS STORY

Before I was diagnosed with MS on February 13, 2013, I was living an amazing life as the mother of two sons, Matthew and Mitchell. I was working my dream job as a Special Agent, FBI. I was at the top of my game, both personally and professionally, when I started experiencing tingling, numbness and weakness in my extremities and the inability to think clearly and make decisions with confidence. And then I fell... and my life changed in an instant.

My MS diagnosis was devastating. I didn't get up for two days because I thought my life was over. I only knew one person with MS, and she was in a wheelchair and needed full-time care. I was scared, but I knew I had to act. Relying on my FBI training and experience, I formulated a plan and set goals. My first goal was to keep moving, no excuses. I knew that every day I didn't move was a missed opportunity. I regained my balance, strength, and flexibility through Pilates workouts and daily walks with my companion pup, Murphy. Once I was able to manage my own MS with the help of family, friends, and doctors, I wanted to encourage others to move with me. I wanted to give hope to anyone who couldn't move, and their caregivers, by volunteering at MS fundraising events. I thought volunteering was enough until my mentor, Chris Russell, proved me wrong. Chris is on the National MS Society Board of Trustees and works with Meat Fight, a Texas non-profit that donates bikes and trikes to people who are living with MS. I received my trike (#198) in February 2019, and in return, I agreed to train for and ride one of the Bike MS® events.



In May 2019, I rode my trike in the Bike MS: Texas MS 150 from Houston to Austin, Texas to show my appreciation to the National MS Society, Meat Fight and to everyone who rides and volunteers at these events. I made friends and witnessed countless examples of people who live their lives with compassion, philanthropy and humility. I was brought to tears many times during the two-day event by acts of kindness from riders, donors, volunteers, friends, family, and all the people in the communities along the route who cheered us on. The ride was so physically and emotionally challenging that I thought it would be one and done. But... I signed up to ride again this year because I can. **Because each of you inspire me, and the fight to arrest this devastating disease is making real progress because of your fundraising efforts.**

#BIKEMS
#TEXASMS150

Don't just ride, Bike MS