

2002 HS Scholarship Winner

James L. Glenn

(Don't miss info on his video: "Bigger Than Life: A Teenager's Journey with CFIDS" – information at the end of this essay.)

Chronic Fatigue Immune Dysfunction Syndrome influences all decisions and functions of those who it victimizes. It creates an alternate perception of our everyday lives. Day planners are no longer for planning, but for reminding. Tylenol and aspirin become more like daily vitamins. Every season becomes a flu season, and suddenly short walks feel like a twenty-mile triathlon.



Living with CFIDS has severely limited my physical and mental activity, one of the worst punishments that a stubborn perfectionist can ever endure. However, I have found strength and ability in my disability. My stubbornness pushes on, and makes me want to succeed even more than before. Seeing others with this illness, friends that have become like family, I feel indebted to help improve their quality of life.

You see, while the physical pain that came along with CFIDS has left scars on my body, the disbelief and opposition I encountered has left an open wound on my heart. When I first became ill, to the point where I could barely stand on my own two feet, I was told by several "specialist" that I was tired, or lazy, or didn't want to go to school anymore. I was told by my school nurse that I was "not physically ill, but depressed." I have been a straight A student since first grade, right up through high school. Since the day I became acquainted with the word "success", I have been independent, determined, and college bound. Now all of a sudden I just want to shatter every dream I've had since I was a little boy? Think again, doctors.

I recently received my letter of acceptance from The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, where I will be majoring in Psychology in the fall of 2002. My goal of higher education is to go as far as I can possibly go, pass the finish line and keep on running. One of the major misconceptions of CFIDS is that depression is a cause. I believe that in most cases, depression is secondary to the horrible symptoms that come along with the illness. I hope to someday use my professional career as a psychologist to be an advocate for CFIDS patients, as I have chosen to do in my personal life. I would also like to continue making CFIDS documentaries, and inspirational videos. Creating "Bigger Than Life: A Teenager's Journey With CFIDS" is one of my greatest accomplishments, and one that would not have been possible without so many other wonderful people that have dedicated their lives to helping others and making a difference. I hope that I can do the same.

James Glenn's Video

In 2001, James produced a video documentary entitled "Bigger Than Life: A Teenager's Journey With CFIDS" about his experiences living with CFIDS. His video (number V69) can be borrowed by our members from the NJCFSA Lending Library (see the Library page for instructions on how to order it and other material). NJCFSA is proud to support James and his efforts to continue his education. James is a graduating senior from Egg Harbor Township High

School in Egg Harbor. He will be attending Richard Stockton College in Pomona this fall and intending to major in psychology.