Jakob Jackson

Living with Multiple Sclerosis

This is my story

Life often moves at unpredictable speeds, and rare are the moments when we are forced to slow down. Four months after finishing the hardest challenge of my life, the bar exam, I found myself extremely ill, sweating through my clothes, and unable to stand on my own because of severe dizziness. It would take another six months to find out why. On June 24, 2025, **I was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis (MS),** an incurable autoimmune disease in which the body attacks and damages the protective sheath surrounding nerves in the central nervous system.

This disease manifests in numerous ways and can exhibit differently based on the individual. The wide range of symptoms associated with MS can make diagnosis difficult, often resulting in a diagnostic delay of one to two years. The fact that I experienced my first flare-up and was diagnosed within a six-month window is an incredible blessing.

After a diagnosis, the next step is identifying the proper treatment. Treatment varies from patient to patient, and many people experience a gauntlet of trial and error before finding the option best suited for their lived experience. The key to this experience is treatment versus cure. As of today, there is no cure for MS.

MS is experienced differently by everyone affected. I experience intense bouts of vertigo and persistent hearing loss. Often, I feel as if I am not the "right kind of patient." My experience is not what society typically imagines when it thinks about MS. People think about individuals with mobility difficulties or people in their 50s. As someone who does not fall into either stereotypical camp, it can be isolating.

Since my diagnosis, I have noticed two important things in my life. First, we cannot control what happens in our lives, but we can control how we respond.

I mourned the loss of an old life as I accepted the reality of a new one. However, that feeling could not be permanent. I had to keep moving forward. The sudden nature of MS places the fragility of life into one's immediate field of view. I have and continue to learn the value of slowing down, of smelling the roses, and re-orienting my life around Our Lord, who is in control of all things. Second, **life does not have to be a solo adventure.** God places people in our lives to lean on and learn from. There is no weakness in asking for help, and MS is a disease that often requires it. I am incredibly blessed to have family, friends, and colleagues in my life I can count on. They help me not to feel isolated on this journey.

Multiple Sclerosis is a cruel disease that does not discriminate against anyone.

It does not matter how old you are or where you come from, and symptoms will show up differently for everyone. However, the continued efforts of medical professionals, researchers, and the community over several decades have led to significant advancements in treatment and understanding of this disease. **Although there is currently no cure for MS, there is always the promise of tomorrow.**

Saturday, April 11th

9AM

Lafreniere Park

Fundraising Goal:

$3,000

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Walk with MBLB to support Jakob & others living with MS.

walk MS

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