

## **Testimony**

### **Janine Militello**

Hi my name is Janine Militello, I am 17 years old and was diagnosed with Chronic Fatigue and Fibromyalgia 4 years ago. Before I was diagnosed the doctors kept telling me that I needed to see a psychiatrist. I was starting to lose faith in all doctors because I knew there was something wrong with me. After the diagnosis nothing really changed most doctors had no idea how to help me and kept telling me I needed psychiatric help. They had no clue about what I was going through and they all kept trying to tell me how I should feel. Many people would recommend better doctors to me but they wouldn't see me because I'm under 18.

I have seen many different doctors and each one seems to have a different idea of what I should be doing; so it's hard to come up with a plan. While certain things stick out to one doctor, another doctor will say it's normal. I also have so many different symptoms that flare up unpredictably. Often a major complaint one week is no longer a concern the next and there is a new symptom I'm dealing with.

Since I have been sick, my life has changed completely. I am in eleventh grade but have no high school memories. I have been home schooled almost all of my high school years. I know more doctors than people my age. My friends have all moved on. They go to school, belong to teams, and have jobs. I have missed high school trips such as going to Italy. My chorus class has sung at Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall. They have a resume for their college application. I was a candidate for the Senior National Honor Society, I had the grades, but I didn't meet the requirements of belonging to school clubs or organizations or having held any leadership positions.

It is difficult for me to picture the rest of my life being this way. In the next few years I hope to go away to college to study pre-veterinary medicine but every time I tell someone that they ask me how I plan to do that if I can't even make it through a full day in high school. Well I don't really know how I'm going to do it but it's all I've ever wanted to do and I can't picture myself going to school for anything else. So I need to feel better soon it has been long enough that my life has been this way. I just want to go back to being a normal kid. I know I can never get back all the time I have lost being sick in bed or traveling to different doctors but I'm still only seventeen I don't want to spend the rest of my life like this. There are so

many things I want to do but its scary thinking I'm still going to feel this way in 10 or 20 years.