



Cystic Fibrosis Research, Inc.

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I am a warrior. A CF warrior. I'm not the only one. A CF warrior is anyone who has cystic fibrosis, and has to battle against the disease. There are good days and bad days, but there are no days off.

She is a CF warrior. My daughter, Tess was diagnosed with cystic fibrosis when she was five months old... Tess will be fifteen in December, and has spent her entire life waging a daily battle against the disease.



My mother and I sat down and did some math together, to figure out what I've done to stay healthy in the past year. In just one year, I have had over 750 respiratory therapy treatments, have injected myself with insulin nearly 1,200 times, and have swallowed over 12,000 pills. This does not count my stay in the hospital last year for my third sinus surgery, or the tons of extra antibiotics and steroids I have taken to battle infections. While this is my own regimen, I can predict that it is not very different from that of my fellow warriors.

To look at Tess – as with so many with CF - you would never know what she goes through.

I don't tell you all this for your sympathy. This is all that I have known my entire life. And I won't let CF hold me back from my dreams. So, while I did all the medically-related stuff above, last year I also recorded my first album, performed in venues from Santa Cruz to San Francisco, took hours of dance classes every week, traveled with my family, hung out with my friends, and generally led a so-called "normal" teenage life.

Tess maintains an incredible level of activity due to the hard work she invests each day to maintain her health. Named a "Hero of Hope" when she was only ten, she is an inspiration to many.

But I have to be honest. It is hard to have CF. While I refuse to let the disease tell me my median life expectancy, it is always something that hangs in the background. It is tough not being able to spend time with my fellow CF warriors, because of cross infection fears – the risk that we will share the germs that live in our lungs. It is a drag to be at the doctor's so often.

Cystic Fibrosis Research, Inc. (CFRI) has been a vital resource for our family. I attended my first CFRI Educational Conference three months after Tess was diagnosed, and have returned every year since. The conference provides me with critical CF information and brings me together with other members of the CF community to share experiences, camaraderie and support. In addition, CFRI's newsletters, resource materials, web site and DVDs address the multi-faceted needs of our community, and help me to be a better advocate for Tess

Still, I have hope. I know that there are some clinical trials happening now that are very exciting. I take medications every day that did not even exist when I was diagnosed, thanks to ongoing research. And I know that there are many people out there who are working hard every day to find a cure for my fellow CF warriors and me.

Since the first small CFRI research grants were distributed over thirty years ago, this organization has provided over \$7.9 million to fund over 187 research projects, conducted by 64 investigators at 17 institutions throughout the United States. CFRI research funding has contributed to numerous discoveries in the understanding and treatment of the disease.

Research only happens if there is money to pay for it. My mother has been on the Board of CFRI for many years, and I have high hopes that CFRI funded research will make a difference for all of us with cystic fibrosis.

As a member of CFRI's Board of Directors since 2002, I know first-hand how efficiently and effectively donations are utilized. With each research discovery, the promise of a cure for cystic fibrosis becomes closer. Until that day, CFRI-funded researchers provide links in the knowledge chain that is extending and enhancing the lives of those with CF, including my warrior Tess.

Please donate to CFRI. Please be as generous as you can. We are getting close!

Please generously support CFRI. Your contribution will make a difference.

Thank you,

Tess Dunn
CF Warrior

Thank you,

*Siri Vaeth-Dunn
Member, CFRI Board of Directors
Mother to a Warrior*

P.S. Be a part of the cure! I'll even grant you honorary warrior status. ☺