



I entered the Renfrew Center of Philadelphia, PA on May 16, 2000, after trying unsuccessfully to beat my illness on my own as an outpatient in my home town. Before I entered the hospital, my weight kept falling over a period of time to dangerously low levels. By the time I reached Renfrew, I was very near death. Some people wondered how my family or I let myself get like that. Looking back, I realize that I had absolutely lost control over myself; however, at the time, I really thought I had absolute control over myself. I worked very hard at Renfrew; I wanted to make the most of my time while insurance was covering my stay, but more so, I wanted to make my family



and my friends back home proud of me. My “struggle” is named rightfully so because I had descended so far into malnourishment that it was, beyond description, very hard to return to normality. Going from staring death in the face for so long to somehow seeing the light was, with no doubt in my mind, a miracle. I gave my eating disorder the name “Fritz” and vowed, as I got better – little by little – that “Fritz” would never have control over me again.

Recovery has been inexpressibly difficult at times, and I have suffered many relapses. I have learned not to give up when I falter, but to pick up the next day where I left off, and continue to strive and succeed. Anorexia is something I must deal with every day, because it never really goes away. I have become a stronger person. I find it a little bit easier to deny the “Fritz” voice and use my own voice for guidance. I am thankful to say now that everyone who was involved in the treatment of my illness feels that I am quite a strong-willed individual and is so proud of me, because I was able to overcome not only death, but a disease that takes so many precious lives of women and men on a daily basis. I have become wise beyond my years because of all of the obstacles that I have had to overcome. I am more introspective now, than I have ever been. I know of many people who look up to me because of the unwavering dedication I displayed throughout my entire recovery period. I did not let the bad times bring me down too much, and I let the good times lift me up all the higher. I have been a role model to two of my cousins who are also dealing with this disorder. I deserve to be proud of myself – and I am. I thank God for helping me live through this tragedy, and for the opportunity to help others through the struggles I was able to overcome.

People who know what I have been through appreciate and love me more knowing how far I have come. In order to save my life, I had to learn healthy coping skills. By using these skills, I now know that I can overcome any problem. I am proud of all I have accomplished, but I pray that I will never have to go through anything similar again. Caring for others brought me through the worst times, because I could not care for myself. Now, I can help others to love and care for themselves. Nobody deserves an eating disorder, but finding the strength to overcome it can unlock the power to destroy demons and understand that no problem is bigger than life itself.

