

Austin Speaks: on Stroke

October is National Health Month and to honor the month and raise community awareness about various health challenges that are affecting our neighbors, friends and family, the Windy City Word has taken time to interview residents of the Austin community faced with daily health challenges and find out how they deal with them. This week's focus is on Stroke. African Americans have a much higher risk of death from stroke, as they are twice as likely to die from stroke as Caucasians. While African American stroke survivors are more likely to become disabled and have difficulty with daily living and activities, Lora McBride is defying the odds as a fully functioning stroke survivor with minimal challenges.

Please read McBride's interview.

WCW: Please tell us your name, age and occupation and what community you are a resident of.

Mrs. McBride: My name is Lora McBride, I am 48 and I live in Austin. I am a housewife.

WCW: Please tell us the name of your challenge or health condition and explain how it has affected you? What part of your life has this condition affected most?

Mrs. McBride: I am a stroke survivor with nerve damage to my right side. I also had high cholesterol, high blood

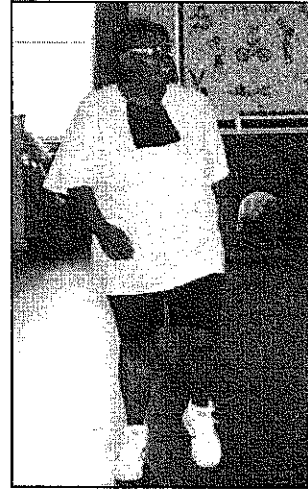
pressure and poor circulation. The negative part has been the short-term memory loss. I would lose my keys and could not use the stove because I would forget to turn the stove off. I would misplace a lot of things. I could not remember my children's birthday or age. The only thing I could remember was that I had a husband, but I didn't remember any children. I was imbalanced and had to have a cane and a walker. I was very emotional; I couldn't go out in public, I couldn't stand crowds or people. I was afraid of people and I stayed in the house for five years.

Whenever it was cloudy, I couldn't come out, my body would collapse. It was the moisture in the clouds that's why I was having so many problems. It used to take me 10 minutes to get to the back of the house because I was moving so slowly. I wouldn't accept new things or people. My mind was like a nine year old and I had to work hard to get back to adulthood. I couldn't be touched, I couldn't talk, and I wouldn't socialize with people. I was going to the psychiatrist once a week and now I am down to twice a month.

WCW: How long have you been living with this condition? How do you deal with it?

Mrs. McBride: I had the stroke in 2005. I have dealt with it by getting out more. Getting on the bus—I couldn't stand it when I tried it. I used to have to wear earplugs, I couldn't stand any noise at all. Most of the stuff has left due to Body and Soul [a program of The Westside Health Authority]. Body and Soul helps you get off of medication and could help you get over the

"Hello My Name is Lora McBride, I'm a Stroke Survivor."



things you are going through.

To have gotten to this point, I have to thank Sandra Pointer, she had to threaten me because I had a hard time meeting new people and going to a new place for fear that they would hurt me. The first time she came to pick me up for Body and Soul, I wouldn't come out of the house and she said "If you don't come out the house I am going to knock on the door and act very ugly and you don't want to be embarrassed"[McBride laughed]. She threatened me for a good cause. They gave me strength, balance, stability and energy since most of my medicines make me drowsy. I have only lost 4 pound, but I lost 4 dress sizes.

WCW: What medication do you take for the condition, if any?

Mrs. McBride:

- Lyrca (pain)
- Clonazepam (muscle relaxant)
- Tricor (high cholesterol)
- Effexor (Anti-depressant)
- Fexofenadine (Allergies)
- Zolpidem (Insomnia)
- Aggrenox (Stroke)
- Clarinet (Allergies)
- Rifedipine (Hypertension)

I was taking Vitamin b12 shots once a month and I was also taking a Novocain patch for a bruised hip because I could not walk. The doctor said as soon as pounds fall off, he is going to elimi-

WCW: Are there any routines you have adopted to prevent your conditioning from worsening or to improve your condition (I.e. Exercise or a change of diet)?

Mrs. McBride: Exercise has helped the most and communicating with the class has helped my soul too. I've got energy I can work longer with no pain. I don't have any severe pain, I can move any way I want. I have lost half shoe size. The clouds don't affect me anymore. The doctor calls me a miracle patient. He didn't recognize me when I came into his office. I have eliminated anxiety, I can be touched, I can be hugged and I don't have panic attacks. I can meet people. The psychiatrist will be able to let me go soon. I'm walking normal. I have eliminated the cane, I can get in my heels, and I can get in my clothes. I have confidence in myself. This all happened in 3 months. I exercise 5 days a week; 2 hours at home, then 2 hours with Ms Daisey [at Body and Soul]. I used to not could do it, I would cry.

My eating habits have changed. I have eliminated salt, red meat and pork. I am more of a vegetable/fruit eater. I go by a food chart, and I feel good, I am ready to explore. I broke down that wall of fear. I didn't even know I could laugh. When I dropped that wall I saw people motivating me. I do not have negative emotions. I don't break down tears anymore. When new people come to the group I encourage them. No insomnia, I don't need a sleep aid. Depression, I don't even feel depressed. My brainpower has improved, I can read a book.

WCW: Do you ever feel hopeless or crippled by your condition?

Mrs. McBride: At first I was, I thought there was not hope because people told me that it was not going to get any better. My husband told me God is going to send me somebody to help me, and he did and that was Body and Soul.

WCW: Is there anything else you want to share or would like readers to know? Any inspirational words for someone who may have the same condition as you and may be reading this?

Mrs. McBride: The best thing they can do is talk to their maker and get out there and have faith and believe and find the right program.



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