



## SYDNEY'S STORY

Written by Ryan Dreibelbis

Eric Keys, his daughter Sydney, and their family have been dealing with Parkinson's disease for about ten years. It's a decade that has seen difficult changes for Eric, a former veteran and very active man. It's also a decade that has seen Sydney mature immensely, raising \$50,000 for P4P along the way.

Sydney began her fundraising career a little earlier than most. At seven or eight, with her dad just having been diagnosed, Sydney already felt a desire to take action. She began going through her father's address books and soliciting his contacts for donations. As she has grown, her fundraising efforts have become more expansive, including helping to obtain P4P's corporate sponsorship from NuStar and hosting a trap shooting competition. All of her work has led to a substantial monetary windfall for P4P.

The donated money has been important but there have been other important benefits from Sydney's work. She has maintained her connection with her father, a qualified shooting coach with a 4H youth organization. He loves the charity shoot and comes to Sydney's shooting competitions on a regular basis. Reaching out and asking people to donate also created a huge network of friends and family that knew about Eric's disease and were willing to help support him. It further connected the Key's to an even bigger support network in P4P and Sydney became an accomplished runner as a result. She started running in the Baltimore Running Festival very young and has completed two half marathons and will attempt her first full marathon this year. Her respect for her father's active lifestyle and the knowledge that she is making him proud keeps her moving when training gets difficult.

When Sydney was young and her father was first diagnosed she remembered him being away on business frequently. He no longer is able to work or lead the active lifestyle he enjoyed. But now teenager Sydney drives him to his doctors' appointments and runs errands with him. Eric was diagnosed with Parkinson's in his 30's with two young children. Sydney can tell that her dad has bad days where he misses his mobility and freedom, but she can also tell that he's doing his best to handle it and still be a great dad. Through it all Eric remains Sydney's rock.

A decade with Parkinson's has been difficult for the Key's but it has also seen Sydney mature beyond her years. As a teenager she'll have completed a marathon, raised over \$50,000 for a charity, and done everything she can to support her dad.

