

Kari's Story

In January 2017, Kari, a mother of two teenagers woke up not feeling well. She decided to take a warm bath hoping it would make her feel better, but her condition deteriorated quickly and she knew something was seriously wrong.

A call was made to 911 and within hours she was airlifted to the Mayo Clinic. By the end of the day, she had 27 IVs delivering as many antibiotics as her body could take and she had received 48 pints of blood trying to flush her system of a nasty infection that had spread throughout her entire body. The doctors had determined she had streptococcal pneumonia and they were unsure she would survive the night.

Kari lived, but the infection had already done permanent damage to her circulation system. Within weeks, she had all her limbs amputated. Six months later, she came home learning how to live a new life as a mother and wife with no arms and legs.

There are times in our lives when life thrusts us into change, into foreign, unfamiliar territory; and it's often not our choice. Kari certainly didn't choose to voluntarily give up her limbs, but with a 'new normal' she does choose to face life on its terms and be open to a new way of being; a new way of thinking. And she is doing it with grace and courage.

This past summer, Kari attended True Friends Camp Courage to have one of her first get-a-ways. She had the courage to leave the comforts of her home and new reality to once again experience something new, to have a break from her everyday life. She used the wheelchair accessible zip line and filled her days with a variety of activities, but the psychological and emotional boost of feeling "normal" and not "out of place" was even more important.

"This is a great place," Kari said in a recommendation of True Friends. "This was my first time ever coming. I became a quad amputee last year, this place made me feel normal again. I was able to do every activity here. Never felt out of place."

When Kari heard about True Friends, she found an organization that says "YES" to people when others have said "NO". We look at abilities not disabilities... we see possibilities not obstacles. We provide cutting edge programs that make life better and more meaningful.

Kari has such an amazing spirit. And she has inspired us to keep working toward fulfilling our vision: a world where experiences and adventures are open to individuals of all abilities.

