



A Mission of Education

As a result of her experiences in high school, Michelle works to dispel myths and encourage understanding of those with inherited bleeding and clotting disorders.

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High school can sometimes be a rough transitional time in many people’s lives; living through the teenage years and getting ready for college or work. It can be rougher when someone is dealing with a medical situation that other kids don’t understand. This is one woman’s story of how she took her lifetime blood disorders and used it as an opportunity to educate others about inherited bleeding disorders.

Michelle not only has von Willebrand Disease (vWD) but Factor V Leiden as well. Von Willebrand Disease is a bleeding disorder where Factor V Leiden is a blood clotting

disorder. At 13 years old she noticed she had heavy bleeding that wouldn't stop, so she and her mom sought the help of different doctors until they finally found one doctor who confirmed she had von Willebrand disease. Then, after a visit with the Hemophilia Treatment Center of Nevada, it was confirmed that she also had Factor V Leiden.

“My diagnosis came as a surprise to my family because everyone is healthy. They ran tests on my family and found out that my mom and little brother both have Factor V Leiden. No one yet besides me has vWD.”

Having both a bleeding and clotting disorder complicates her treatment.

As high school began, Michelle went from just hanging out with her friends to attending numerous doctors' appointments and missing school quite a bit.

“People in high school weren't really that nice. I was always out for doctors' appointments and getting nose bleeds in school. They used to call me the ‘sick one’ and always asked me when I was going to die.”

After a rude comment from a classmate, Michelle decided she was going to make sure each person she knew would become educated about her inherited bleeding disorders.



“I made it my goal to teach at least one kid every day about bleeding disorders. I would go sit with people and explain to them what exactly it is and how we can live a normal life. I go around on social media posting about bleeding disorders and talking to adults about them. I believe it's so important to educate everyone.”

Michelle wants everyone that is learning about inherited bleeding disorders or has misconceived notions about people that live with these disorders to know - they are just like everyone else.

“People with bleeding disorders are normal people too. They can do anything they want. They don't bleed out if they get a cut, no it's not contagious, and no they're not weak. They're strong people.”

Now Michelle attends youth group meetings through the National Hemophilia Foundation Nevada Chapter's youth group and has met some amazing people.

“The youth group helps me connect with people my age and it also provides me with information I need in order to become an adult and know how to take care of myself in the future. We do a lot of fun activities and we even get the opportunity to go to Washington, D.C. and Carson City, Nevada to educate our elected officials about the unique needs of the bleeding disorders community. To go out there and connect with others and know you're not alone

and make a big difference in the bleeding disorder community is an amazing feeling.”