

## LIZ Joyce – Champion Fundraiser



Hi, my name is Liz Joyce. I am 29 years old and am a self-employed personal trainer. Outwardly I have the appearance of being the picture of health, but the driving force behind my involvement with the Whistler Half Marathon and the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada is that **I have Ulcerative Colitis**. When you think of someone that lives with the daily uncertainty of a chronic illness, you may wonder, who is this person? What does the face of someone with Colitis look like? Well, this is me.

My symptoms began in June of 2008, at 24 years old. It began with a small amount of bleeding when I used the washroom, progressing to extreme difficulty digesting food, debilitating abdominal cramping and pain, fatigue, and an array of other symptoms that have been painful, embarrassing, isolating and frustrating.

I remember waking up from the first colonoscopy I had, incredibly groggy from the meds, with a pamphlet in my hands. The nurse said I'd already spoken with the doctor and that I had **Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD)**. There I was, disoriented and a diagnosis that I didn't take too seriously for about 6 months. Only when I had a hemoglobin count that was half of what it should be did I realize I was in some real trouble! I had no idea how life changing that diagnosis was going to be. Life after diagnosis has been filled with doctor visits, hospital visits, blood work, IV treatments of various sorts, 9 different medications, and a new understanding of uncertainty and developing the ability to push through it.

As the symptoms got worse, I became more depressed. I felt utterly helpless. Prior to this, I had been in absolutely perfect health... and I mean perfect. Which is one of the very scary things about IBD, it has no prejudice. People from all ethnic backgrounds, age groups and lifestyle choices are diagnosed with it all the time. Currently **1 in 150 Canadians** live with IBD!



The CCFC contributes to the research and development of medication that brings quality of life to people like me, research that will find a cure. We have some major successes to celebrate. Due to massive advancements in treatment options, surgical intervention is down **40%**, IBD-related emergency room visits are down **60%**, and hospitalization is down **50%** in the past 15 years alone. Now those are some stats we can be proud of !!!!!!!

Because of fundraising events like the one you are participating in, my team of doctors now has the ability to put me into REMISSION, surgery free! This is not to say that I couldn't have a flare or develop a reaction to my cocktail of medications and end up at square 1 all over. These medications also have side effects that are truly terrifying. It is one of my biggest dreams in life to have my doctor tell me "Liz, you no longer have Colitis."



You have the opportunity right now to help make that dream come true and part of every IBD patients' everyday reality! Help us fund research that will find a cure for Crohn's and Colitis. You have the opportunity to bring hope to patients just like me. You have the opportunity to give the gift of health.