

Dear Dr. Burt,

When we met in November of 2015, I was relapsing on my second DMD within the prior six months. I had declined quickly after having 13 years of relative stability.

In May of 2015, my status changed from a 15-year career as an executive director and administrator of assisted living facilities to holding onto the handrails in the hallway myself. I continued to decline, and finally I had to stop working. I decided to find out if the "MS stem cell study," as I recalled it at the time, was still active. In 2006, my friend Alissa interviewed you for JAMA and told me about the clinical trial. At the time, as a single mom running a busy facility in Lincoln Park, I wasn't ready. But everything changed nine years later—and I was ready.

I remember being really nervous to meet you—I had never wanted anything more in my life than to have HSCT. I was wearing my "Dr. Burt/HSCT shirt"—the one that has the word art, and you saw your name on my shirt and asked where I got it. I told you I ordered it from someone on Facebook and that I'd buy you one (and I did).

At the end of the appointment, you told me you could help me. And you did. I'm walking independently. My original symptoms are still with me, but the newer symptoms from 2015 are resolved. I'm working again—a less stressful job now of running a senior center for the City of Chicago—and I'm happy. I have a future, and I won't take it for granted.

You are my hero...and a hero to so many others. Words seem inadequate to express my gratitude and appreciation. Thank you.

Love & Gratitude,
Ellie

