

Son-In-Law Hopes To “Cripple The Deck” To Help Wife’s Father

Poker Tournament & Pig Roast To Benefit Fight Against MS

BRISTOL, Conn. Doug Pierce, 26, didn’t know much about disabling diseases, such as multiple sclerosis (MS), until his then girlfriend took him home to meet her parents. At first glance, the Manchester family of four was much like any other family upwardly mobile parents, two daughters, a dog and a cat. However, it didn’t take Pierce long to realize his girlfriend’s dad wasn’t typical he was a man confronting physical challenges of which few do in a lifetime.

Crispino, today, father-in-law to Pierce, was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1991. His disease is progressive, gradually robbing him of mobility and balance. An avid cyclist, Crispino was almost sidelined when his legs became too stiff to pedal. Not to be undone by his disease, Crispino acquired a handcycle, which he pedals with his hands tens of miles almost daily. He also rides in annual bike tours, such as the bkm/Steelcase Bike MS hosted by the National MS Society, Connecticut Chapter. Pierce, a native of Lancaster, Pa., and a former Navy flight technician for the P3 Orion, has been moved by the tenacity and drive demonstrated by his father-in-law.

“It’s a privilege just to know Alec,” said Pierce, who, since first meeting Crispino, has run marathons, participated in bike rides and hiked the Appalachian Trail to help raise funds to find a cure. “I have never once heard him complain or engage in self pity. He refuses to let this take control of his life, but on the contrary takes control his disease. I have never met a person that fights harder to appreciate life than my father-in-law. I am so proud to be able to call him ‘Dad.’”

More than 6,000 Connecticut residents, like Crispino, live with the potentially debilitating effects of multiple sclerosis, a disease affecting the central nervous system. The cause is unknown and there currently is no cure. The disease is unpredictable. It affects each person differently. Symptoms can include tingling and numbness in the extremities, fatigue, changes in vision, imbalance, pain, speech impairment, and, in some cases, complete paralysis.

In honor of his father-in-law and to raise funds to help find a cure, Pierce will host Spring for a Cure, a poker tournament and pig roast, Saturday, May 17, at 1939 Perkins Str. in Bristol, Conn. The poker tournament begins at 11 a.m. and ends at 4 p.m. The pig roast takes place from 4 to 10 p.m. The event features Black Velvet from 6 to 9 p.m. Tickets are \$40 per person or \$70 per couple.

“After years in the Navy, I’ve become a pretty good player,” said Pierce, who will also be cycling in honor of Crispino in the upcoming June 1 bkm/Steelcase Bike MS tour in Windsor, Conn. “I invite others to ante up, and join me in the fight against multiple sclerosis. I can’t think of a better reason to play.”

Tickets are available in advance or at the door. For more information or to pre-register, please contact Peirce at doug Pierce1@gmail.com or call at 860-930-8152. For more information on multiple sclerosis, its effects and the many ways to help, please visit <http://www.ctfightsms.org/>.