



SSEEO Goes on the Road!

SSEEO young stroke survivors present to EMT's at the IEMTA Conference in Springfield, IL.

The first responders were so impressed by the young stroke survivor's honesty while sharing their stories and their passion to get the message out about stroke.

"As SSEEO's Director, I continue to be amazed at our young stroke volunteers and their willingness to share their stories. I am always impressed by their confidence and composure while sharing a very difficult time in their lives to a large audience. They are stroke heroes!" - Christine Winiecki.

April is Volunteer Month...

This month is dedicated to honoring all of the volunteers who have given their time and talents in our communities.

Michelle Jordan, SSEEO volunteer and stroke survivor has been championing for other survivors for over five years.

After having a stroke at 42, I was looking for ways to help me with my new normal. I discovered SSEEO. Their educational resources were just what I was looking for. Before long, SSEEO offered me an opportunity to volunteer and I took it.



I began volunteering with SSEEO because it gave me purpose. I developed new skills and forged new relationships. Volunteering allowed me to improve on my stroke recovery.

Most importantly, I was able to help other stroke survivors on their journey, while still traveling on mine.

One of my favorite quotes is "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." -Mahatma Gandhi. Take the steps to volunteer today and make yourself the best you possible.

SSEEO would like to thank all our volunteers who have given countless hours to support our mission. A special "thank you" to Michelle, who was also a former Board Member, as she leaves her volunteer role of Social Media and Communications.



Angie Keister Stroke Survivor and SSEEO Volunteer

It was 2007, and I had spent the weeks leading up to my 30th birthday at Loyola Medical Center re-learning to get dressed using only one hand. I felt frustrated, because I didn't want to learn to accommodate the relative paralysis of the left side of my body after my stroke. I wanted to get

back to "normal."
I wanted to go home.

"Angie, you're not going home."

My husband's words cut through my denial. He was right. I wasn't going home anytime soon.

It wasn't until I became a mom that I broke out of the mistaken notion that my body needed to return to "normal," whatever that means. One evening my daughter Addison took off running into the street while I watched helplessly, physically unable to make my body run after her. Thankfully a kind stranger stopped her, but I learned a hard lesson: no matter how far I had come in my recovery to date, it was not going to be enough to keep my children safe. So, I needed to get creative with this new body and find a way to feel capable, rather than broken.

Not long after, as I watched my youngest daughter Avery learn to walk, I noticed that she didn't care how she got from Point A to Point B. She shimmied, crawled, and rolled her way through the world. Avery taught me that any preconceived notions I had about what walking should look like were my own.

So when Addison learned to gallop in her pre-school class, I had an idea. I asked her to teach me, and we practiced together until I felt confident in this new way of moving. I decided to conduct an experiment. I told Addison to run the driveway of our house to see if I could keep pace with her, and I learned that I could if I galloped. I felt triumphant. I could keep my daughters safe, at least until they could out-gallop me.

There were two stories I held about myself that came together in this pivotal point in my recovery: one was that I was capable, and one was that I was broken. At the intersection of those points came the realization that while I have a disability, I am not disabled.

My goal as a SSEEO volunteer is to help stroke survivors understand that you are in the best position to know what is possible for your body. No medical expert can put you back together again. It's you who holds all the information on how the assembly should go.

Try everything, be creative, and embrace the gallop.



Randy Crabtree, SSEEO President and stroke survivor hosted his yearly fundraiser, a Celebration of Friends, Family, Life and Beer! Each year Randy hosts an event to bring awareness of stroke and fundraise. This year he and his friends raised over \$2500.00 for SSEEO. Thank-you to all those who donated.

Please consider making your next party...a party with purpose in honor of a stroke survivor or caregiver with donations going to SSEEO's mission to provide advocacy, support, education and resources to stroke survivors and their families.

Together **WE** can make a difference!

What's New...

Stroke Matters

SSEEO's New Podcast Series

These podcasts build community, provide support and share information. All podcasts are available on the [SSEEO](#) website. Our first learning series will include spirituality and yoga, music and art therapies.



Save the Date!



The current date may change due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Coming Soon...

Stroke Talks 2 Go (ST2G)

May is stroke awareness month! SSEEEO has decided to not let COVID-19 and social distancing stop us from educating others on stroke prevention/education.

We will be hosting virtual stroke presentations via Zoom starting mid-April through the end of May.

These educational calls can be used for your schools, scout troops, hospital community outreach, etc.

Visit our website at www.sseeo.org for dates/times and call-in details.



SSEEEO

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