



Pajamas and Pancakes

Enjoy a short stack for a tall cause

You are invited to a

Shining Stars Academy Pancake Fundraiser breakfast to support

No Kid Hungry

ALL YOU CAN EAT PANCAKES FOR \$1

When: Saturday, March 17, 2018

9:00am-11:30am

**Where: Shining Stars Academy Preschool
6339 South Highland Drive, Holladay**

Raffle Tickets are available for \$1 each at Shining Stars Academy Preschool,
at the door the day of the event, or on our website:

www.shiningstarsutah.com

*Pajamas optional

Come enjoy a fun breakfast and family movie. The event will be open-house style, with a family movie starting at 9:30am. We will have raffles, a prize wheel, and all proceeds will benefit No Kid Hungry.

16 million children in America face hunger, across the United States. It's in every community. It's Real. With your help, we can change it. \$1 provides 10 meals to children in the community.

*Please see the back of this flyer to find out WHY WE CARE

No Kid Hungry is a national campaign run by Share Our Strength, a nonprofit working to solve problems of hunger and poverty in the United States and around the world.

My Dear Friends,

They say life is a journey. And it's not just about the destination, it's about the journey.

This particular journey began for me at the beginning of 2017. Life circumstances placed me in very stressful situations that were beyond my control, and for a person who thrives on order, I was having a VERY tough time. Fast forward to August, when a culmination of events landed me holding on to a thread, trying desperately to find the joy in any little light I could find.

It began with feeling too sick to eat and having an overwhelming feeling of nausea and dizziness on a regular basis. I'd eat, but always feel sick to my stomach. I tried a variety of treatments that didn't work, and by Halloween I was only able to take a few bites of food at any given meal. It was at that time, that I began to have a huge feeling of pain when eating, as if a very large person was punching me in the stomach about 6-8 minutes after I'd eat anything.

By Thanksgiving the pain was constant. The last meal I really remember having was the day before Thanksgiving when I had a third of a cheeseburger. At that time I could still drink smoothies so I was basically living on smoothies and rice and a bite of food here or there. I remember putting a bag of turkey and a bag of stuffing in the freezer and putting away a can of cranberry sauce so that at some point I could have a "leftover sandwich".

I was consistently losing weight and had lost about 5-7 pounds, which is a lot when you only start at about 90.

The doctors ordered an endoscopy to be performed the second week in December, thinking I had ulcers and told me that when I woke up, they would have a plan of action for getting me better. This was a day I REALLY looked forward to and was SO excited to finally be able to eat again. I was down to about 80 pounds and was starting to feel really weak. By that point I was taking Phenergan every night, just to be able to deal with the nausea. Unfortunately, they didn't find anything during the endoscopy, so my doctor put me on a Jell-o and broth diet until they could get some tests done. While waiting for the testing approval process to go through, I ended up in the ER due to extreme dehydration and kidney stones, and a second time from the unbearable stomach pain. By then I could drink only a little bit of a smoothie at a time and wasn't able to swallow more than a bite of food. I FELT LIKE I WAS SLOWLY STARVING TO DEATH. I was SO hungry all of the time. The most recited sentence I felt like was, "When I get better...", or "when Mom gets better..." I started to make a list of things I would eat when I could finally eat again someday and I would go to sleep at night with my husband telling me of all of the yummy places we would go to.

I was finally able to get the tests scheduled and I spent the last week in December at the hospital getting every stomach test imaginable done, something that I never care to repeat as long as I live. They finally gave me a few possible diagnoses and told me that they were 85% sure that my gall bladder needed to be removed. The approval process for the surgery was then begun. I was getting weaker by the day and was down to about 77 pounds.

By the first week in January I couldn't even drink water and we decided to get the surgery done whether or not the insurance approved it. I remember talking to a "member advocate" at the insurance company, explaining my situation and my physical condition and her telling me, "I don't really know what to tell you, I probably won't be able to get to your case until tomorrow or the next day." Of course my kids were livid and wanted to call her themselves to plead my case. Faith said to me, "she probably just got off of her lunch break or has a snack sitting on her desk."

MOST PEOPLE IN AMERICA DON'T KNOW WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO BE ACTUALLY HUNGRY.

I was able to get into a very kind doctor, who, upon seeing my condition, now 74 pounds and barely able to walk, re-arranged his surgery schedule to get me the earliest possible procedure.

On January 10, 2018, I had my gall bladder removed. The first week was really rough, as I had started from such a weakened state. The doctors told me that I would have a very long recovery and at that point it still hurt to eat anything.

I started re-introducing food to my body, which was a process in itself and decided that this was not something that was going to beat me. I decided to fight my way better, and if you know anything about my determination, you know that I am definitely stubborn and a survivor and this was going to be no different.

A month and a half after the surgery, I look back and think to myself, "that very kind doctor saved my life". I have gained back most of the weight, and have more energy than I can remember having in a VERY long time. Food tastes SO much better – as if my senses have been heightened, and EVERY BITE OF FOOD I SWALLOW IS REGARDED AS PRECIOUS. I feel like I have been given a second chance at life, and I have a determination to make this world even better from the journey I have been on.

I tell you this very long story because my journey doesn't end there. As I was sitting and reflecting on all of the events of the past year, my mind fell upon the thought of others that, like me, know what it feels like to be hungry. My view of food and of hunger is SO different from before. I have always had a special place in my heart for homelessness, but this experience has hit a very deep cord, contemplating the thousands of children that, through no fault of their own, experience the hunger I experienced – on a regular basis. Children that don't know where their next meal will come from.

I realize that in my current circumstances, I can't fill the hunger of every child in the world, but I can do something. I KNOW WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO BE HUNGRY. I KNOW WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO BE STARVING. And it is a horrible feeling. A feeling that for at least a few children, I can change.

Please help me in this journey and in this quest to bless others from what I have been through.

With Love,

Sam ☺