

My MS Journey

Teeing off to end MS

SOREN SCHOU



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This marks Soren's 18th year participating in the MS Golf Challenge. He has raised more than \$145,000 in that time.

It was during a game of squash, nearly 19 years ago, that Soren realized something wasn't right.

“My legs weren't functioning properly for me to be able to play,” says Soren, adding that he was up against a player he would usually have had no problem beating at the game.

Soren went straight from the squash courts to Vancouver General Hospital, where he spent 4 days undergoing a series of tests. The results

didn't point to MS, but he wasn't convinced, so he sought out a second opinion, which is when Soren was diagnosed with relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis.

After the initial shock wore off, Soren decided to educate himself about the disease.

“My wife and I debated what we could do to get involved in the search for a cure. We both play golf, so we turned that into an opportunity, and raised funds through MS Golf.”



It was here that Soren discovered his natural affinity for fundraising. "I could be a professional fundraiser," he jokes. "I ask everybody. I'm not shy about it. It's really just about asking and asking and asking again." Clearly his technique is working. He has consistently been the top fundraiser for the MS Golf Challenge, raising more than \$145,000 over the past 17 years.

"It feels very rewarding to know that my fundraising provides people living with MS with emotional, medical and informational resources, whether they are newly diagnosed or have been living with the disease for a long time," Soren says. When two of his friends were diagnosed, he directed them to the MS Society website stating: "It's a great tool to stay current on research, available treatments, and community events."

"MS is a very unpredictable disease, unique to everyone who lives with it. I've been very lightly afflicted by it so I am extremely fortunate in that respect." He recalls feeling fearful in the

first couple of years after his diagnosis, "Probably the biggest impact was just thinking about my MS and being fearful about it every day," he shares. His medication now gives him a sense of calm and security, "I find it reassuring that the treatment is there. It helps."

As the MS Golf Challenge celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, Soren is looking forward to being on the course again. This year will be his 18th tournament and when he talks about the event, his passion for the cause shines through.

"MS Golf means getting the word out there! We need to raise funds for research and for support," he says. When asked if he had any tips for fundraisers, he advises, "Don't be embarrassed. It doesn't hurt to ask and you definitely won't get anything if you don't ask! We all need to put a bit of effort into raising funds to get that research done, and hopefully find that cure!"

Join Soren on the golf course this year for the 20th anniversary of the MS Golf Challenge. Contact Jason.hulbert@mssociety.ca for details.