

**Young woman displays grit and patience daily while suffering epileptic seizures**

Ansley Tyre hustles from completing schoolwork, conducting small groups at church and leading members of Capernaum, all while wondering when her next seizure will be.

“The summer before I started Moody [Middle School], I was at my uncle’s lake house and I had a seizure in the basement,” said Ansley Tyre, 21-year-old student and church leader. “My mom came down to check on me because I had a lot of bug bites, and she was really convinced I had a seizure from the bug bites.”

According to the [Epilepsy Foundation](#), approximately 3.4 million people in the United States have epilepsy, and between four and 10 out of 1,000 people on earth live with active seizures.

After emotionally and physically draining scans and MRIs, she would find out that the seizures were caused by a brain tumor; Tyre calls it Lisa.

“She is a friend and a foe,” Tyre said. “It changed everything; they put me on this medication called Keppra that made me ridiculously depressed.”

At 12 years old, at the same time battling the highs and lows of puberty, Tyre didn’t sleep. She recounts being mean against her control, and now she is tackling epileptic seizures.

It didn’t stop there. In the conclusion of her middle school years, the family house burned down, forcing the Tyres to live in a small hotel room with their two full-grown goldendoodle dogs.

In high school, Tyre admits she had trouble following her belief in Jesus fully. She experimented with alcohol and drugs because it was what the cool kids did. She went to religious groups like Young Life because everyone else went.

During the heart of summer, students from five different high schools around West End Henrico County in Richmond, Virginia, went to a Young Life camp at Saranac Village in upstate New York.

Days are filled with water sports on the glistening Saranac Lake; nights are spent alongside bonfires, sharing thoughts and stories while trying to keep warm among the Adirondack mountains.

Tyre remembers all of those moments but from a different perspective. After a day of water-tubing, she had another seizure. Recovering in isolation, she watched from above in the media box as strangers and close friends worshipped together in the large club room.

“That really sparked that [religious] piece because I had never really had anything that I felt was a healing power that I believed in,” Tyre said.

Following her new realization, Tyre involved herself in Capernaum, a Young Life program for students with disabilities.

“I have always really loved the idea of loving people that other people overlook, and I think that’s really important,” Tyre noted. “Later in that journey I realized that I think the main reason why I love it so much is that I don’t think heaven is supposed to look like one skin color, one language or one ability.”

Tyre described one of the most influential moments in her religious journey taking place at Hope Church. Her friends characterize her as someone others look up to, and at this moment she took it upon herself to take a freshman girl to her first worship night.

Tyre recounts looking over at the girl and seeing a figure of a man standing next to her. When she looked over a second time, he was gone. The only explanation Tyre could produce is that it was the girl’s father, who had passed away by suicide years earlier.

“I had never heard of spiritual gifts like that because most people don’t talk about it unless it happens,” Tyre said.

After worship concluded, Tyre asked the girl her thoughts about the night.

“She said, ‘It was so special; I felt like my dad was there,’ and that was my solidifying point in ministry,” Tyre said.

As the clock struck midnight on New Year’s Eve between 2019 and 2020, Tyre and her close friend, Gracie Matz, attended a conference in Atlanta, Georgia, called Passion.

Starting in 1995, [Passion](#)’s mission is to bring students from around the country closer to Jesus, according to the website. Passion believes in worship and justice, so students of the conference have been able to donate \$18 million to 70 organizations across the globe.

“All the speakers really stirred my heart to pursue and love others well and stand firm in the truth of Jesus,” Matz commented.

It was at Passion that Tyre had the realization that she did not want to go back to college at Longwood University. Upon returning home from Atlanta, she stayed there and moved onto her next endeavor – leading small groups at Hope Church.

This past summer, Tyre had another seizure that took away her driver’s license for the second time. This seizure was different; most lasted 30 seconds, and this one went on for five minutes.

According to the [Epilepsy Foundation](#) and the Medical Advisory Board for the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles, one must be seizure-free for six months before reclaiming his or her license again. As busy as she remains, Tyre is forced to ask for help when it comes to getting around town.

Annie Bartley, a close friend of Tyre, called 911 that day when Tyre had her most recent seizure. Luckily, the women were in the driveway of the Tyre family house when it occurred, so Bartley was able to call for Tyre's mother quickly.

"Something Ansley has instilled in me is to love every single person around you," Bartley said. "It is beautiful to watch her live life with a giving and gracious heart."

Tyre loves to drive and help others. The first year she had her driver's license, she drove six people to and from school each day, getting Taco Bell together as an afternoon snack occasionally.

Other times, she would drive students to Young Life club every Monday night, making sure to play the best songs on the radio.

"I had never understood how badly I struggled with pride and control," Tyre said. "It has taught me so much about how to ask for help and rely on other people, which is something I am super uncomfortable with."

As one of the consequences of her seizure, Tyre quickly learned how to be comfortable with isolation, which as her friends would attest, is something she is not used to or enjoys. Tyre is a people person. She shared how her friends are her greatest support system. After trying therapy and talking to professionals, she found that the friends she had made with the common interest of faith kept her grounded.

"People care about me even if I'm not providing for them," Tyre said. "I have a community that is willing to help me when I need it. I don't think I would have ever chosen to learn that."

Tyre continues to study religious studies at Virginia Commonwealth University online. She expressed how thankful she is with her decision to stick with it, and how her Capernaum

students and sixth graders make her the happiest she has been because she can lead with her heart.

At her most recent MRI scan, Tyre found out that her tumor has been growing. Tyre noted that even though it sounds as if her relationship with God fixed everything, she wants people to know that she still has questions.

“I still get confused and frustrated at every doctor’s appointment,” Tyre admitted. “I leave every MRI feeling defeated. There is still so much loss; it’s just knowing that that loss has already been defeated that grounds me.”