Thank you so much for all your help!
Renée,

Because of being born with an intestinal blockage, I was quickly diagnosed with cystic fibrosis. Fortunately my doctor had served his internship with a cystic fibrosis specialist and recognized the signs of the life threatening disease. Dr. Robert Kramer diagnosed me with cystic fibrosis, a genetic disease that causes the body to produce thick excess mucus, especially in the lungs. I underwent surgery to remove the blockage, and after six weeks I was discharged from the hospital, the battle just beginning.

The build up of mucus in my lungs makes me susceptible to lung infections and I am required to take frequent respiratory therapy treatments and preventive medicines in order to avoid them. Though I take these medicines I still get sick and have to have home I.V. therapy or be hospitalized. The mucus in my digestive system inhibits digestion and I have to take enzymes to help digest my food. These costly medicines and Hospitalizations leave little money for college.

I was fortunate enough to have wonderful parents who taught me not to let my my illness dominate my life. They allowed me the experiences of childhood while integrating discipline in self-care into my life. They never denied me the sense of being "normal". I have had little trouble meeting challenges set before me and have set my goals to according to my ability.

Through cystic fibrosis I have learned a great deal about people. I've seen other CF children stripped of their right to experience life. In waiting rooms I've watched parents worry that their child will hate them because they made them take the hosts of medicines and treatments. One girl, healthy by CF standards, quit high school because she would be dying soon, and saw no point in graduation. I have often wondered if things would be different had someone taught these parents and patients how to deal with disease.

My goal is to help patients and families deal with terminal diseases. I want to help children deal with their illness and the spinning world they have been thrown into. Most of all I would like to teach parents that children need to have things explained to them. Some parents seem to forget the importance of normalcy to a child and need to be reminded.

In order to achieve my goal I plan to major in sociology. I have taken the need for communication with children into consideration and plan to place an educational emphasis on early childhood studies. I would also like to study art as a useful therapy tool with children and eventually become a children's art therapist. I hope that someday I can help to make the lives of terminally ill children more fulfilling and purposeful, the same way my family has helped me.

Heather Renee Floyd
10/23/77 - 9/11/96