

[A life abroad](#)



Travel and adventure are possible, even with progressive MS.

by Carol Huebner



Carol Huebner in front of the Black Dragon Pool, a famous pond in Yunan Province, China. Photo by David Huebner

My husband, Paul, and I both have an adventurous spirit, and we've been fortunate to travel

quite a bit. After Paul retired in 2007 from his career as a piano teacher, I agreed to move to China so that he could immerse himself in a language he had been studying each summer for 10 years. We both relished the opportunity to be immersed in a new environment. I had been retired since 1998 due to my multiple sclerosis, and the prospect of teaching again—this time to eager Chinese students who would come to my home—filled me with a renewed sense of purpose.

Still, I was a bit anxious about being a wheelchair user in a foreign country—especially one like China, where ancient structures coexist with modern amenities. I needn't have worried. Most surfaces are built of smooth concrete, and ramps are common on newer buildings. Even when buildings have several steps at the entrance, strangers are usually eager to help Paul lift my chair—perhaps because we look foreign, or perhaps just out of kindness. In any case, I've never been unable to go where I want.



I agree with physicist Steven Hawking, who lives with ALS: Disabled people should continue to do whatever they can still do well, or they will be disabled in spirit as well as in body. Thanks to my husband's love for Chinese culture and travel, I may sometimes be exasperated about my body, but I am rarely depressed about life.

Carol Huebner was diagnosed with secondary-progressive MS in 1986. She and her husband, Paul, have lived in China since 2007.

For information on accessible travel, visit nationalMSSociety.org/Travel.