

Meet Society board member: Dana Foote



Dana Foote speaks from experience when, in her role as a vice chair of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society's board of directors, she talks about helping people with MS navigate the healthcare system.

Last January, Foote, who was diagnosed with MS in 1998, spent some 20 hours sorting out insurance issues after switching her medication.

"Why do they have to make it so darn hard?" she asks.

The painful experience made her wonder how people with less access to resources figure things out.

A partner at KPMG, LLP, the audit, tax and advisory firm, Foote contributes more than her expertise as a volunteer on the board. She offers the perspective of a person with MS.

"It guides me every day," she says.



Dana Foote and her family — husband Donovan and daughters Kristin and Katelyn — walked 100,000 steps during a European vacation as part of Walk Your Way last summer.

Foote was diagnosed with relapsing-remitting MS after feeling tingling in her left hand and dizziness. The disease was already very much part of her life: her mother-in-law also had MS.

Foote attended a self-help group and then participated in her first Walk MS® event in San Diego. Soon after, as she looked for an organization to get involved in, a colleague suggested that she follow her passion. And so, in 2003, she started volunteering at a local Society chapter.

It was the start of a relationship that, in addition to her leadership on the board since 2011, includes annual Walk MS events with her husband and two daughters, and constant emails and networking to raise money for the Society. She is a member of its Circle of Distinction thanks to her efforts, which have netted more than \$1 million.

When Foote first joined the board, she had one goal in mind: finding a cure.

“I’ve been pretty fortunate in how I’ve been able to handle my MS,” said Foote. “But my drive comes from, ‘What about the next generation?’”

She has come to appreciate other aspects of the Society’s holistic approach, including the vital role advocacy plays in getting government funding for research and the valuable help MS Navigators offer people seeking resources.

Foote says her MS has made her a better and more empathetic leader. Whether advocating for people with fewer advantages, making sure business decisions give everyone a fair chance or talking to new hires about overcoming adversity, she takes action, breaks stereotypes and challenges the status quo.

And she tells her MS story to whoever will listen, whether it’s colleagues, clients or others with the disease.

“I want people to see me standing up, being a partner in a firm, having a leadership role,” she says. “You can make the impossible possible.”

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