

Creeslough woman is the face of MS campaign

New chapter: Maggie Greene is an inspiration to many and is undertaking her doctorate at DCU

A woman who has been living multiple sclerosis for six and a half years has been chosen as one of the faces for the MS Ireland's World MS Day campaign.

Maggie who lives in Creeslough with her husband Danny, their children Abigail and Conor is a lecturer in education and is currently doing her doctorate at DCU.

Maggie loves going for walks on the beaches and forest near her home with her family.

She is an enthusiastic baker, a novice gardener and an avid fan of reading, she can often be found with her nose in a good book with a coffee and the dogs by her side.

The theme of the Faces of MS exhibition featuring Maggie Greene in partnership with Novartis is to highlight and challenge the perceptions of what people living with MS look like and are capable of.

MS Ireland is commemorating World MS Day with an exhibition of portraits of eight members of the MS community as part of MS Ireland's schedule of events marking the international MS awareness week all over Ireland.

Multiple Sclerosis is different for each person impacted by it.

They experience different symptoms, with different degrees of severity for different amounts of time. There is no one way to "have" MS, there is no one way to live with MS.

The aim of the exhibition is to showcase a range of experiences so people will better understand that MS is

a very individual condition.

Maggie spoke of her story and journey with MS: "I was diagnosed with RRMS six and a half years ago.

"I am a mother, a wife, a lecturer and a student. I have a busy life, but I've had to learn about balance.

"I've had to assess how I use my energy and identify every day what I can and cannot do.

"I try not to give my energy to things that will drain it these days.

"Plans change, life happens and I adapt.

"When I was first diagnosed I thought that life was over, it wasn't, but it was inextricably changed forever in a myriad of complex ways.

"My identity felt shaken, I struggled to see who I once was and I kept looking back at her, wishing I could change things, but I couldn't, so life went on.

"Gradually I accepted that MS was now a part of my life and I began to assess what this meant for my family.

"Luckily I have a huge support network around me, I'm very privileged in that regard.

"At the minute I still work full time, and during the pandemic I decided to go back to university part time to study for my doctorate.

"This was something that I had wanted to do just before I got diagnosed, but it took some time to build my confidence up again, as I was worried that I wouldn't be able to sustain, that I wouldn't have the energy, that I wouldn't be able to balance it all with home and work and all that lies in between."

She says that studying is not easy but it has done wonders for her sense of self: "I feel like I've found myself again, that I'm back on the path that MS swept from under me.

"It's different now, it's not easy, but it's my one precious life."

Chief Executive of MS Ireland, Ava Battles said: "There is no singular experience of MS, the journey is unique to each individual.

"Our community has seen huge developments in terms of treatments and therapies over the past three decades but we still have hurdles to overcome.

This World MS Day we want to challenge misconceptions around MS and redefine the face of MS in public perception by shining a spotlight on the full and varied lives of those who live with it."

Managing Director Novartis Ireland, Caitriona Walsh said:

"World MS Day 2023 is particularly significant as it marks almost thirty years of scientific developments and progress in the field of MS in Ireland.

Over the past three decades thousands of people's lives have been impacted by the developments in treatments, therapies and groundbreaking research and development that have changed the face of MS.

At Novartis we are dedicated to harnessing the power of scientific research and development to ensure that the progress continues for many years to come and that we continue to support people living with MS in Ireland and worldwide."

MS Ireland is holding events and activities to raise awareness on World MS Day through its great network of local branches and regional offices throughout Ireland with all details on their dedicated webpage.