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Donegal mum Maggie Greene was diagnosed with a pinched nerve that turned out to be MS

Maggie is taking part in MS Ireland's new campaign, which sees portraits of eight people from around Ireland who are living with MS captured to highlight that the MS journey is different for every person

By Erica Carter

20:01, 3 JUN 2023 UPDATED 20:46, 3 JUN 2023

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Maggie Green with her children, Abigail, age 9, and Conor, age 8, at home in Creeslough, Co Donegal. Picture courtesy of MS Ireland by Joe Dunne 21/09/20 (Image: Joe Dunne Photography Ltd (Courtesy of MS Ireland))

Maggie Greene began experiencing pain, pins and needles and numbness in her right arm a number of years ago.

However, after a number of visits to the doctor, she was told that it was a pinched nerve.

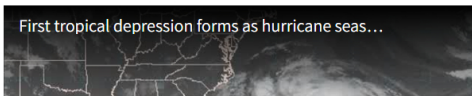
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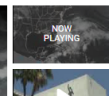
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When it persisted, the Donegal mum was eventually diagnosed with relapsing remitting Multiple Sclerosis.

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Speaking to RSVP Live, Maggie said: "I started to get quite a lot of pain in my right arm and I experienced pins and needles and numbness. I went to the doctor quite a few times and was told that it was likely a pinched nerve. Then I got another doctor and she said it might be a good idea to get an MRI to rule out anything more serious.

"I was very quickly sent for the MRI and I got the results of that a few weeks later and I was told that I didn't have MS.

"But then I was sent to a consultant and they told me that the information I had been given was incorrect and I did in fact have MS. That came as a shock."

Maggie's children were quite young at the time, something which added extra weight and worry to the diagnosis.

"It was something that came to the forefront of my mind immediately," she said. "Because my perception of MS and the outcome of MS was so skewed, I immediately thought that I wasn't going to be able to look after my children.

"They're very young. I want to be able to stay the active mother that I am."

However, after coming to terms with MS and realising that her assumptions about the condition may be mistaken, Maggie began to seek support.

"It took me a while to settle into my diagnosis and seek the support that I needed," she said. "One of the first things locally that I came across was the MS Ireland webpage and I got in touch with them quite quickly. It was very reassuring to have that support there and see that my assumptions about MS needed to be more informed."

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For Maggie, her main symptoms are fatigue and pain. "It affects everybody so differently - it's like a fingerprint, I've never met someone with the same experience as mine," she explained. "I can get very fatigued, it's one of my predominant symptoms. So I have to be very, very careful with my energy. I still can get pins and needles and numbness and a lot of pain. I have relapsing remitting MS so the symptoms do abate after a while."

However, she realised that living with MS doesn't need to hold her back from pursuing her goals. "I had been doing a Masters at the time of my diagnosis and I had hopes after that to go on to do a doctorate, and when I got diagnosed that just didn't seem like a possibility anymore," Maggie said. "But I am doing that at the moment, it's part time and the university I'm with is very supportive. I'm in a group with the most incredible people that keep me going."

To mark World MS Day 2023, MS Ireland and Novartis brought to life the impact that these developments have had on people living with MS across the country through an engaging photography campaign that showcases the lived experience of people living with MS in Ireland. Portraits of eight people from around Ireland who are living with MS have been captured to highlight that the MS journey is different for every person, and that there is still an unmet need in multiple sclerosis.

The portraits was unveiled to the public on Tuesday 30th May 2023 in Stephen's Green Shopping Centre. Through this campaign MS Ireland hopes to challenge any misconceptions around MS and the stereotypes that may be associated with the condition.

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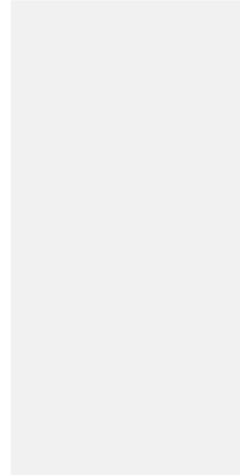
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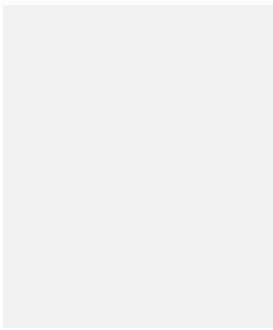


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