

I WANT MY DAUGHTER BACK!

Our daughter, Michelle, graduated from Northern Illinois University in May of 1999 with her Bachelors Degree in Sociology with emphases on Criminology. She was all set to start the Master Course in the fall and she was getting a free ride as the school was paying for her tuition and she was to be a teacher's assistant.

Because she had a job at the school for the summer, she did not return home. But something was wrong! She would call us and say "come and get me, I can not stay here". My husband would make the 1 ½ hour ride to get her and bring her back home. I do not remember how many times this happened during the summer, but when school started again for her, I was relieved. My husband and I did not know what was wrong with her, but we found out later that she was having Panic Attacks.

School started and about 2 or 3 weeks into the semester she called again and said that she was quitting, she could not do it. We said that was fine, you have your Bachelors, so come home. She had signed a lease in De Kalb and had a job there, so she did not feel that she could come home. At the beginning of 2000, being a Lake County Employee, I saw a job opening at the State Attorney's office. I called Michelle and told her to apply. She did apply and was interviewed. She did not get that job, but a couple of months later, another job opening came up. I called her again; they remembered her and gave her the job. She was concerned that she had that lease in De Kalb and we offered to pay her share for her to come home. She did come home and got the job and moved in with two of her girl friends.

The next seven plus years were great. She moved up from Secretary in the Juvenile division to Victims Counselor in the State Attorney's office. Things were going great for her. She had bought a condo and was living on her own. She met Jim and they married in September 2006. They decided to have a child.

In 1999 she was started on Prozac and then in 2001 she was put on Paxil. We had been out of the loop on this and did not know what she had or was going through. Her doctor said that she had to get off of Paxil to have a child. After seven years of being on it, he took her off in six weeks with nothing to replace it. She started having HIGH anxiety and Panic Attacks again. That was in March 2007.

On July 31, 2007 she had a break down at work. The doctor put her on Fluoxetine, Seroquel and Clonazepam.

I had no idea what was going on. I had to drive to her house and sit with her all day because she did not want to be alone. I did this for over one week before she admitted herself. On August 4, 2007, she admitted herself for the first time in the hospital.

When she was admitted, the hospital doctor said that the doctor that took her off of Paxil in six week set her up to fail. It should have taken her six months or more to get off the medication.

She was there for two weeks and came out on Ativan, Seroquel, Trazadone and Zoloft. From August 20, 2007 to September 20, 2007 she was in the outpatient program at Centegra In Woodstock. Jim's friend, Lou, stayed at their home and drove her to Woodstock each day.

In October 2007 they decided not to have a child and tried her back on Paxil, replacing the Zoloft. The Paxil did not work for her anymore.

The next four years were a nightmare for her and the family. She admitted herself another five times into the hospital: March 2009, Weaned off Paxil and tried Lexipro, Clonazepam and Seroquel; August 17, 2009 tried Effexor did not work, back on Lexipro; May 3, 2010 added Abilify to the mix; July 7, 2010 tried Paxil again then back to Citalopram and Seroquel and July 20, 2010. Every time she got out there was a different medication or medications. During this time, suicide was finally talked about. Her telling us that she had "bad thoughts" did not really tell us what was going on.

One Sunday afternoon, she was talking to her dad on the phone and saying how sorry she was for all she had put us through, etc. and she said "Oh Shit!" and hung up on him. Rich called Jim and was told that they had had a fight and she had left the house in her car. While on the phone, Michelle came in the house and told them that she was sitting in her car on the railroad tracks waiting for the train.

When I heard this, I was dumbfounded. What was really going on here? We were all afraid to talk to her, because we did not want to upset her. But we also did not want her to commit suicide.

Her husband, Jim, was her back bone during these four years and even when she told him to get a divorce and find someone he could be happy with, he said no, he was only getting married once and that was it.

From 2007 to 2009, they relied on Lou a lot and he lived with them and drove her to all the outpatient programs that she had to attend. In the summer of 2010, I worked for the 2010 Census. It was a great job and I could do it on my own time. She got out of the hospital for the last time by signing that she would not be left alone 24-7. Her sister, Andrea, drove to their home every evening and stayed over night and then drove her to the day clinic that she had to attend. This is a one hour ride there and another one hour ride back. I had to be out there at 2:30 pm to pick her up and bring her back to her home or ours and wait for her husband.

She was not the same person. She would sleep for 18 hours a day or would stand and just stare at you. She was like a Zombie!

From August 2007 to January 2008, she was off of work at the State Attorney's office and finally she went in and resigned because she could not go back to that job. It would not be strange for her to have 80 to 90 cases of Juvenile crimes on her desk and she was the only Counselor for these children. She tried to get some one to switch with her so that she could go to the adult courts, but no one wanted the job that she had. Over the next four years she did have a part-time job with an eye doctor for about 18 months, but was unemployed most of the time. She was forced, due to no job and all the medical bills, to file bankruptcy. The economy and housing decline did not help the situation.

My husband and I needed to stop sitting by and do something to help her. Everyone was telling her that she had to stop sleeping so much and it was up to her to change her attitude about what she was going through. I did not buy this. I felt that it all had to do with the medications and the doctors she was seeing who did not give her the right stuff.

In February 2011, we sat down with Michelle and Jim and told them that there was something wrong and we wanted her to go to Mayo Clinic for a complete workup, physical and mental and find out what they recommend for medication for her. We told them that we would pay for it and take her there and stay with her. Jim did not like it and said that Mayo was good for physical problems like cancer, etc but new in the mental division. We were very disappointed. What can parents do with an adult, married child to help? Our hands were tied.

We got an appointment with a counselor for us, because we could not cope with this anymore. We told her about the Mayo Clinic and she was against the Mayo Clinic also and said she would go to Rush in Chicago. I called Rush and they would not take Michelle's United Health Care insurance.

Our daughter was informed about NAMI, National Alliance on Mental Illness and wanted to attend the meetings. They were in Crystal Lake and they started before her husband could get home and drive out there. So she asked her dad to drive her. He went and told me that I had to come too. June 16, 2011 was the first NAMI meeting that I attended. For the first hour, there was a program with a presenter for both the family member and the "consumer" or person with the mental disease. For the second hour, the consumers would have a support group meeting while the family members would have their own support group meeting. When it was my turn to speak about our situation, I told them about wanting to go to Mayo and the outcome of that. We were told that about one year ago, they had a speaker in from Glenview that we might want to talk to about treating Michelle. We got the doctors name and number. A couple of days later, I called the office and over the phone was told how they treat the patient with Neuroscience. They could map her brain and tell what part of the brain was not working just right and be able to tell her what medication would help her. This was the answer to our prayers! Get her on the right medication.

Now we had to talk Michelle and Jim into this. I took Jim aside by himself and told him about this and asked him to support us and encourage Michelle to at least go for the consultation and listen to what the doctor has to say. He agreed and we went. Our first consultation appointment with the doctor was on August 6, 2011. Jim, Michelle, my husband and I were all there. Michelle had to fill out a four page questionnaire about how she was feeling, etc. The doctor talked to all of us for over 1 ½ hours taking all kinds of notes about Michelle's childhood and any falls that she might have had, head injuries, etc. Dr Poprawski suggested we get the book "The Healing Power of Neurofeedback: The Revolutionary LENS Technique for Restoring Optimal Brain Function". We ordered the book, started reading it. Michelle and Jim agreed to start the treatment. On August 24, 2011 she had the EEG of her brain and on August 27, 2011 we all sat down with the doctor and she went over all that was found via the EEG. I have to note here that no other doctor or hospital had done this EEG on Michelle in the last four years.

Michelle was on four medications at this time (Clonazepam, Abilify, Citalopam and Seroquel) and the doctor said that she was sure that if Michelle would start the LENS treatments, she could be off the medications. It might take a year, but she would do it slowly so that she would not have to go back into the hospital again.

Because of her testing during the EEG, the doctor gave her Ritalin, used a lot for ADHD. After taking that medication, Michelle was not tired as she had been and did not sleep that afternoon. After two days, the doctor talked to Michelle and changed her to another medication called Aderroll which is like Ritalin. It was like a 180 degree turn about for her. She does not sleep during the daytime anymore and you can actually have a conversation with her now.

September 24th, Michelle and Jim went to the Doctor's office for the one month check up on the new medication. The Doctor said she wanted Michelle to start the LENS treatments. October 5th was Michelle first LENS treatment which was a mapping of 21 spots on her brain. October 12th was her actual first treatment to 7 spots that showed needed treatment. October 19th the treatment was to 9 spots and October 26th was to 8 spots. November 2nd was a remapping. The remapping showed a lot of improvement.

The doctor also started taking her off Clonazepam. She was taking it morning and night. She started taking her off of it at night. As of November 3, 2011, Michelle is now off of Clonazepam both morning and night. She is now in the process of taking Michelle off of Seroquel.

Michelle interviewed for a part time job on November 10 and told during the interview about having to take Wednesday off due to her treatments. I thought that was a mistake to tell them about her condition during the interview, but did

not say anything to her. She got the job, I was in shock. It was temporary for one week of 16 hours. She started the job on October 24th and worked for 22 hours that week. They have asked her back and she is continuing to work there.

Things are looking up for her. Her parents and husband are delighted with what is happening.

The moral of this story is DO NOT GIVE UP!!! This might not be the answer to your situation, but there has to be one out there. I can not believe how many people are taking some kind of medication for a mental illness. Mental illness includes: Panic Attacks, BPD Borderline Personality Disorder, OCD Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, depression, anxiety as well as Bipolar and Schizophrenia. Please, be ever so careful about getting these young kids started on these medications. It is hard to get off and the side effects may outweigh the gain!

Support your local NAMI group. My husband and I have attended the Education Training Classes for Family to Family (12 week class) and have learned so much from this Class. We have learned all about what the patient is thinking and hearing and about the different medications and their side effects. We have now been trained to be facilitators and will be teaching these Classes starting in 2012.

Written by a mother and father who care and feel their pain:

Richard and Sandra Michaels

You can reach us at: Sandee0456@hotmail.com

EVERYONE KNOWS SOMEONE.....

.....WHO DO YOU KNOW!

Michelle found this letter in her scrapbooking stuff in January 2012. 2009 was when she was at a low point. She does not remember writing this letter.

A Letter to My Husband

September 21, 2009

Dear Jim,

Honey I love you so much and I know with all my heart that you love me and you would do anything to make me feel better, but you can't.

I wish I could explain to you in words how horrible I feel, the crazy thoughts that come into my head. The misery and hopelessness and fear that I feel. But I can't.

I know that I am failing you. I've been trying so hard and I am so exhausted, frustrated, angry and sad. None of this is your fault. I recognize that this is all on me!

I don't want to die. I don't want to go back into the hospital. But I don't know what else to do. Everyone says to be patient.....do you have any idea how hard that is when your body and mind are in chaos? Ignore it, you say. Tell it to fuck off. I try. I swear honey I have been trying to do everything. I have been trying to be patient. But I still feel like I'm slipping away. My stupid brain just keeps beating at me and beating at me.

I am not the strong, confident, independent woman you met five years ago anymore. I hate the weak, scared person I have become.

I cannot seem to have fun anymore or laugh or relax or just be content. And the worst part is I can't see past the depression. I cannot see myself feeling better.

I feel like such a weak, fragile person right now. I feel like my life has no meaning beyond you! And that is not enough. YOU cannot be there for me 24/7. YOU cannot fix me. YOU cannot take the hurt and pain away. If you could I know you would.

I am not really sure why I am writing this letter. I don't know if it's fear that I'm going back into the hospital or fear that I might hurt myself or just to write it out. I guess if you ever read this we'll know which one.

I am so sorry that I have let you down. I am so sorry that I have let my parents down, my family and friends.

I am sorry for not being strong enough to fight harder. I feel so pathetic and unworthy of anyone's love, even God. I feel as if I failed as a human being, a daughter, a sister, an aunt, a friend and most of all as a wife. You deserve so much more in life than what I have to give.

Jim you are my best friend and I love you with all my heart. I want you to ALWAYS remember that.

Love Always and Forever,

Michelle

This was written by Michelle in February 2012. Dr. Theresa Poprawski asked her write a testimonial and recovery letter.

February 2012

Have you ever been in a dark place? Have you ever been in a situation where you didn't know how you got there or how you are going to get out (i.e. move on, survive)? Well, I have. I know of many friends, family and strangers that have been there also.

I was diagnosed with Anxiety Disorder and Depression in 1999. Over the coming years I was able to control my symptoms with medication and therapy. Unfortunately that wasn't enough. In 2007 I was hospitalized for the first time for suicidal thoughts. I was in the hospital for two weeks and then an out-patient treatment program for about three months. I ultimately ended up resigning from my job, because I just couldn't handle it anymore. I thought this was the end of it. I thought I was better. I thought I had figured it out. But I was wrong.

From 2007 to 2010 I was hospitalized five times!!! All for Anxiety, Depression and Suicidal Thoughts. After the last hospitalization they diagnosed me with Bipolar II. I thought maybe that was the answer, maybe this will change how I feel, because now I have the right diagnosis. I was wrong. I was sleeping all the time. I wasn't interested in taking care of myself or others. I didn't want to see people. Don't get me wrong....I tried. I went to my therapists, I went to my psychiatrist, I read books....I did what I suppose to do to get better, but I wasn't.

I never thought my life would be the same again. I never thought I would be happy or be able to function in the real world. But thankfully I was wrong again!

In June 2011 my parents (Richard and Sandra Michaels) attended a NAMI meeting, something we had been doing as a family, and at the meeting they heard about a Dr. Poprawski and how she approaches mental illness through the brain. Since I felt that nothing was going to help me, it took my parents a while, but they finally convinced me to see her.

My first meeting with Dr. Poprawski was in August 2011. I had a chance to meet with her and go through my personal history. Both my parents and my husband were with me for the meeting. Dr. Poprawski took her time answering all of our questions and explaining how she uses EEG's to determine treatment for her patients. This was something totally new for me. Someone was actually going to look at my brain and see what was going on.

I did the EEG and met with Dr. Poprawski again. She again took her time and went over her findings and even gave us a print out of the images of my brain. She felt that I was overmedicated and she set up a treatment plan, which included a reduction in medication (at a very slow pace and one at a time), LENS Biofeedback and meeting with her.

I have seen a lot of different psychiatrists in my past. When I met with them it was always a quick "how are you doing?" and "Do you need any prescriptions?" all within 15 minutes. My experience with Dr. Poprawski has been very refreshing. First, my appointments are scheduled for an hour and if we go over that hour, it's okay. Second she takes the time to listen to all my questions and concerns, as well as, my families. I never feel rushed and I always feel important. Third, the staff at Dr. Poprawski is wonderful. They are caring and considerate. They always take the extra time needed for treatments, questions or problems. And finally, Dr. Poprawski makes it easy to get in touch with her if you have additional questions or concerns.

Since I have begun my treatments I have been completely weaned off my anxiety medication and almost completely weaned off my sleep and mood stabilizer medication. I have started working again and I do not sleep during the day. My life has totally changed. I hope again. I have ambition, motivation and positive thoughts. My whole outlook on life has changed. My friends and family have noticed a remarkable difference in me and I feel more stable than I have in many, many years. I do not look to the future wondering when my next hospitalization will be, I am now looking to my future with optimism and adventure.

I cannot tell people enough how my experience with Dr. Poprawski has changed my life and changed my relationships with my family and friends for the better. I am looking forward to continuing my treatment with her and moving forward with my life.

Sincerely,

Michelle Ricker

Age 36

This was written by Michelle in August 2012 as a one year follow up.

Well it has been one year since I started LENS treatment with Dr. Poprawski. I can honestly say my life has change significantly. As stated in my previous letter a year ago I was not functioning. I did not have a job. I was sleeping all the time. I wasn't interested in doing anything! And I mean "ANYTHING". I didn't want to shower or eat or talk to my friends. I felt since I was on the medication that this was how my life was going to be. The medication was keeping me out of the hospital but not living.

Since seeing Dr. Poprawski and the medication changes my life is significantly better. The addition of Adderoll to my medications made an immediate change. I was staying awake and able to do some stuff. With the addition of LENS I was slowly changing. I didn't see the changes at first, because my mind was telling me that I was still the same....still struggling....still not doing what I was "should" be doing. The mind is a tricky thing. But my friends and family saw a change in me and soon I did too.

In October 2011 I finally found a job. It was perfect for me with the hours and pay. I was scared I wouldn't be able to do it, be able to handle it. But I did!!!! And it was amazing. I got there every day, I did my work and I was praised for the great work I did. That was when I started noticing the changes in myself.

Through the treatments there were medication changes. As I said Adderoll was added to my medications, but with LENS I was completely weaned off my anxiety medication (Clomazapan) which I had been on for years and every time I tried to get off of it I would relapse and have terrible anxiety. Now I have NONE!!!! I even went on a Cruise to Mexico in January 2012 with my husband. I was on the plane, waiting for the anxiety/panic to start, but it never came. It was a weird, but wonderful feeling not have the anxiety. Also my legs don't shake anymore and I am more open to trying new things since I don't have to worry about "freaking out".

I have also been weaned down on my seroquel. The highest dose I've ever been on was 250mg (while in the hospital). Last year I was on 100mg and now I am at 25mg. It is amazing to wean down on these drugs and with LENS not have the side effects.

The next goal was to start weaning me down on my anti-anxiety medication, but there was a life change about to happen. My husband and I decided it was time to move. He has wanted to move for 6 years and I was never able to even consider it with my mental health issues. But in January 2012 I told him I was ready. He was lucky enough to get a transfer with his job and we started our planning to move to Florida. This was a HUGE decision for me. I have never lived outside of Illinois and been away from my family and friends.

What was more concerning was what am I going to do about my LENS treatments? Talking with Dr. Poprawski we came up with a new plan. We decided to do another Q-EEG and see where I am. After the Q-EEG we decided that I hold off on weaning down the Celexa (anti-depressant) and we would start weaning down on the LENS treatments. At the time I was going once a week. So we slowly moved to every other week and then every third week. The doctor felt good that I was stable and encouraged the move. She even stated that I did not need to continue with the treatments if I didn't feel it was necessary. I went to a website that was recommended by the doctor: www.ochslabs.com and I found a LENS treatment facility, CNS Wellness, near where we were moving. This is great!!!!

It was about this time (January and February 2012) that I started to notice that I was not have "negative thoughts" anymore. Usually my thought would always go to the worse possible scenario or I would constantly beat myself up. I wasn't having those thoughts anymore. This was amazing.

The move to Florida, although stressful, went well. I handled myself great and I am very proud of my accomplishments. I have started LENS treatments here in Florida and they are going very well. I have lowered my treatments down to once a month, which seems to work well for me. I have a psychiatrist here as well and we are going to start working on weaning me down on the Celexa.

I also found the local NAMI here and try to attend the meetings. Although I am have not found a job here yet, I am applying and things look hopeful.

I have been through so many medications, so many treatments, so much therapy in past 13 years. I have done Cognitive Therapy, EFT, Hypnosis, DBT Therapy, Spiritual Therapy, Yoga, Ti-Chi, Art Therapy, Meditations, Affirmations....the list goes on. I have read all the books and watched the programs. You name it, I have tried it. And all these therapies have helped in me some way. But LENS gave me life back.

LENS may not work for everyone, but it's another viable tool to try and use to be the you can be. Don't settle for less than what you are. You are still in there, always remember that. I still have bad days (but that's what they are....JUST bad days....everyone has them).

I have to share with you that YOU have to want to get better. YOU have to see the light at the end of the tunnel and fight for YOURSELF. Nobody can fix your problems for you. They can help you along the way, but you have to want it too. I am so grateful to my parents for never giving up on me. They continued to educate themselves and push me to be the person I am today.....I am happy. I am living a good life and I am hopeful of the future. I never thought I would be where I am.

Thank you MOM & DAD for being there for me and continuing to be there for others who are in need. Mental illness is the great kept secret, but everybody knows somebody...who do you know?

JULY 2013

Schedule of Events

- ◆ 1st—PAR Refresher from 9-5 in Tampa
- ◆ 4th—Holiday
- ◆ 8th—CPR/First Aid training for Circuit 6
- ◆ 17th—Employee Advisory Committee meeting at 10
- ◆ 17th—Training Committee meeting at 1
- ◆ 18th—Supervisor Meeting
- ◆ 23rd—CPR/First Aid training in Orlando from 9-5
- ◆ 26th—Semi-Annual Meeting at ACTS
- ◆ 31st—PAR Refresher from 9-5 in Tampa

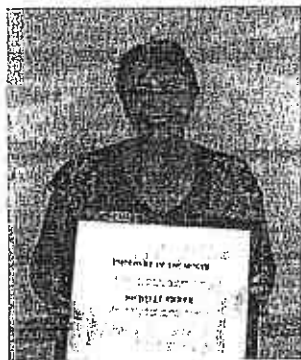
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 PAR Refresher	2	3	4 Holiday	5	6
7	8 Circuit 6 CPR/First Aid Training	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17 EAC and Training Committees	18 Supervisor Meeting	19	20
21	22	23 CPR/First Aid in Orlando	24	25	26 Semi-Annual Meeting	27
28	29	30	31 PAR Refresher			

**Please contact Nikla Kalza (Nikla.kalza@baysforida.org) to register for training

Employee of the Month—May

Coming up in August:

- ◆ 7th—Gang/Violence Awareness presentation—watch for more information
- ◆ 17th—Back to School Bash
- ◆ 22nd-28th—ARISE Training
- ◆ Week of 8/26—Benefit Open Enrollment Meetings



BAYS is honored to proclaim Michelle Ricker as May's Employee of the Month. Michelle has only been a BAYS team member for eight months, but has distinguished herself as a dedicated employee willing to go above and beyond to serve youth and

families and address agency needs.

Michelle's commitment to work is evident to her co-workers in Circuit 6. Last December, after having an automobile accident and being cleared by paramedics, Michelle continued her work schedule and kept her planned youth orientation. She carried on in a professional manner as if nothing had occurred. Michelle's supervisor also indicates her eagerness to accept difficult cases and those in out of the way locations. She is always prepared to overcome barriers to assist youth and families.

Michelle regularly takes initiative to support her team members and

make service delivery improvements. She is consistently there for her colleagues in providing assistance or covering job responsibilities whenever needed. Through her ingenuity, Michelle also created the "Curfew Call Log" to eliminate gaps in documentation. The form is an excellent tool that is utilized agency-wide.

Michelle is an impressive member of the BAYS family who has garnered the respect and appreciation of her office and the entire agency. BAYS is privileged to award Michelle Ricker the title of Employee of the Month.

Logan William Ricker



ONE

Born: Father's Day June 15, 2014