



FIGHTING FLAMES

The Official Newsletter of Fight the Flame®

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FTF CRPS AWARENESS SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Dear Fight the Flame Family,

Each year, one of the most inspiring things we do at Fight the Flame® is award our CRPS Awareness Scholarships. These students are not only talented and compassionate, but they are helping spread awareness and understanding of Complex Regional Pain Syndrome to the next generation.

This year, we received applications from across the country, and once again, we were deeply moved by the thoughtfulness, creativity, and empathy shown in the essays submitted.

Inside this newsletter, we are proud to introduce our two scholarship winners, share excerpts from their essays, and celebrate the incredible impact these students are making.

Thank you to everyone who applied, volunteered to judge essays, and helped us continue this meaningful program.

- Beth Stillitano

You are not alone!

What Is the Fight the Flame CRPS Awareness Scholarship?

The Fight the Flame® CRPS Awareness Scholarship was created to encourage students to learn about and spread awareness about Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS).

Applicants are asked to:

- Research CRPS
- Write an original essay
- Share their new knowledge about CRPS with 10 people.

The scholarship is awarded to graduating high school seniors who demonstrate compassion, creativity, and a commitment to raising awareness about chronic pain illnesses.

Over the years, students from across the United States have participated in the program, helping bring greater understanding to a condition that is still widely misunderstood.



Scholarship Judges

Sandi K.
Shari B.
Summer C.
Charlene F.
Jane D.
Meredith M.

Brandi C.
Jennie D.
Jennifer G.
Katherine N.
Keelin M.
Lisa F.

Scholarship Statistics



Total applications received: **176**

Number of essays judged: **152**

States represented: **30**

Top represented state: **Texas**

Volunteer judges: **12**



Excerpts from our winner's essays

"1:00 AM, I remember sitting awake while my mom was sleeping restlessly after chemotherapy treatment, listening to the quiet moments no one else ever saw, the exhaustion, the discomfort, the weight of it all. It was then that I realized that some of the hardest parts of illness are completely invisible."

Sophia R. from Coral Springs, Florida. She will be attending Nova Southeastern University in the fall.

"That's the reality of Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS), and it's a lonely place to be. In a medical world built on X-rays and clear tests, people with CRPS often have to fight just to be believed. On the outside, they look fine. On the inside, their nervous system is misfiring, sending constant, agonizing signals that feel like fire."

"As I pursue a future in the medical field, I know care goes beyond diagnosis; it's about advocacy and trust. Through storytelling and hands-on experiences, we can bring CRPS out of the shadows and change how people respond to pain that isn't visible."

So when someone says they're in pain, they're believed the first time they speak."

"So when someone says they're in pain, they're believed the first time they speak."

Excerpts from our winner's essays: (continued)

**Elizabeth H. from
Fort Worth, Texas.
She plans to study at
Tarleton State
University in the fall.**

“Complex Regional Pain Syndrome is often called an invisible illness, but for patients like me, it is anything but invisible. CRPS affects every movement, every decision, and every part of our lives.”

“An innovative way to spread awareness is through an ‘*A Glimpse Into CRPS*’ approach. Instead of relying on pamphlets or presentations, this focuses on interactive activities at schools and health fairs.”

“The ‘Decision Fatigue’ station asks participants to perform a simple task while being interrupted with questions, background noise, and external stimuli. This easy activity quickly becomes overwhelming, demonstrating the mental energy needed to make even small decisions.”

“My personal experience with CRPS drives my passion. I have personal experience with having my pain dismissed and misunderstood because others cannot see it. At the same time, I have seen how quickly perspectives can change when someone gets a small glimpse into my daily reality.”

“**Awareness can become something
people truly understand, not just
something they have heard of.”**

Journaling for Better Mental Health

By Jenni Daniel, BSN, RN
Rock Hill, SC

Living with Complex Regional Pain Syndrome is an immensely stressful and emotionally exhausting ordeal, involving constant challenges in coping with the long-term physical pain, functional limitations, and psychological impact of the condition and its ongoing treatment. Journaling emerges as a potent and user-friendly tool to support mental health during illness and medical treatment. This article explores the reasons why journaling proves helpful and highlights the ease with which one can commence this practice.

Reasons to Engage in Journaling:

1. Stress Reduction:

Journaling serves as an outlet for individuals to express their feelings and emotions without judgment, offering a cathartic experience and a release of tension.

2. Empowerment and Emotional Release:

Amid the perceived powerlessness of cancer treatment, journaling provides a sense of control, enabling individuals to track progress, monitor symptoms, and establish goals for mental and physical well-being.

3. Heightened Self-awareness:

The practice of journaling encourages introspection and self-reflection, fostering better self-awareness. Through recognizing thoughts and emotions, individuals can identify patterns and triggers, subsequently developing effective coping strategies.

4. Improved Communication with Healthcare Providers:

Journaling facilitates more effective communication with healthcare providers by maintaining a detailed record of symptoms, side effects, and treatment outcomes, providing precise and accurate information. This is an easy way to share details about your limitations and be sure they are recorded in medical notes.

5. Cultivation of Gratitude and Positive Thinking:

Journaling directs individuals to focus on the positive aspects of their lives, nurturing gratitude and positivity. Acknowledging the good things contributes to improved mental well-being and overall quality of life.

Initiating the Journaling Practice:

1. Journal Selection:

Choose a journal that feels comfortable, whether it's a simple blank notebook, a diary, or one with prompts and inspirational quotes.

2. Designate Writing Time:

Establish a routine by setting aside dedicated time each day to write in your journal, this can be in the morning, evening, or during treatment sessions.

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Journaling for Better Mental Health (continued from page 5)

3. Embrace Free Expression:

Freely express yourself without fretting over grammar or structure. Whether through drawings, single words, or paragraphs, the goal is to release thoughts, concerns, and feelings.

4. Emphasis on Emotions:

Direct your writing towards your emotions, fears, and concerns. Honesty is key, allowing true feelings to emerge authentically.

5. Monitor Progress:

Keep a record of physical and emotional symptoms, treatment outcomes, and progress toward established goals. This not only aids in mental health monitoring but also provides valuable insights for healthcare providers.

In conclusion, journaling proves to be a powerful ally for individuals navigating an illness, offering support for the emotional and psychological challenges. By incorporating these straightforward steps into one's routine, anyone can initiate journaling and harness its benefits for mental health support.



THANK
YOU

Big thank you to
Jenni for submitting
this article.

Would you like to contribute an article, poem,
story, etc. Email; beth@fighttheflame.org

IMPORTANT INFO

We are currently updating our Fight the Flame® contact list. If you have not already done so, please send your:

- Email address
 - Phone number
 - Mailing address
- to Beth@FightTheFlame.org

Your information is kept completely private and is never sold or shared.

FIGHT the FLAME
SAVE THE DATE



Fight the Flame 5K
& 1K Family Roll & Stroll

SEPTEMBER 27, 2026

Raising awareness. Building community. Inspiring hope.

www.FighttheFlame5k.org



We desperately need sponsors to help make this year's Fight the Flame® 5K & 1K Family Roll & Stroll a success.

Do you own a business, or know someone who does that may be interested in supporting a meaningful cause?

Sponsorships help us continue raising awareness for CRPS, support educational programming, provide resources for patients and families, and fund important initiatives throughout the year.

We would be happy to send sponsorship information to anyone interested. Every connection helps, and community support truly makes this event possible.

To learn more, please email:
Info@fighttheflame.org

IMPORTANT!

There will be no support group meeting in June

The Fight the Flame 5K is truly a community event, and it takes many helping hands to make it possible. If you would like to help with planning, volunteering, or if you know of a business that might be interested in becoming a sponsor, please let us know. We would love to have you involved.