



Aspirations for the Future

by Lori Hartwell, RSN President



When I was diagnosed with chronic kidney disease in 1968, no one really talked about my future because back in those days, they

didn't think I had one! But there was one person who finally gave me hope.

I was trying hard to overcome yet another medical hurdle during one of my many hospital stays when my doctor said, "Lori, someday you're going to write a book and call it *I Can*." He went on to tell me how

important my attitude and strong will were to my recovery. That was the first time I started to believe I had a future, and it gave me the will to fight the many battles that lay ahead.

I never thought of myself as a writer, but I knew I had a story to tell. So I began to write about my life, just small snippets of experiences and random thoughts. Eventually, these short stories ended up in a book called *Chronically Happy*, which fulfilled my doctor's prediction.

Untapped Talent

They say that we all have a book in us waiting to be born. I believe that there's a huge,

untapped reservoir of literary talent among those with kidney disease: not only talent, but an innovative perspective that goes beyond the mundane and into the

profound and spiritual. This fresh insight can bring a joyful laugh, a grateful tear, or food for thought as the reader comprehends the overwhelming challenges that those who are chronically ill face every day.

I want to challenge you to start writing your story. All of us have something important to share with someone else. Just look at



the many excellent contributions to this newsletter from people who have kidney disease.

Essay Contest

Do you have an aspiration for the future? To motivate you to start writing, the Renal Support Network is holding an essay contest (see opposite page for details). The theme of the contest is "Aspirations for the Future: What Gives You Hope."

Have you defied the odds to pursue a personal goal or developed a plan to reach your dream? How have you held on to hope despite difficult circumstances? Describe a person who challenged you to go beyond your limitations or tell a story about a pet or a hobby that keeps

a smile on your face. Write about hope!

This essay contest is a forum for you to share your experiences with others, as well as an opportunity to be recognized publicly for your writing. You're

the thought leaders in the kidney community; you provide the most inspiration to fellow patients. Your essay can inspire others, give them hope, and help them realize that they're not alone.

Words live forever. I look forward to hearing *your* story!

Chronically Yours,

Lori Hartwell

President & Founder
of the Renal Support Network

weKAN Live & Give is a publication of the Renal Support Network, a patient-run nonprofit organization whose mission is to identify and meet the non-medical needs of those affected by chronic kidney disease.

weKAN Patient Activists serve to mobilize, educate, motivate, and empower fellow chronic kidney disease survivors to advocate for themselves and for one another. Together we *can* make a difference.

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