



Bright Light Foundation

Rebecca Missig

2011 BLF Recipient



A New Orleans native, Rebecca Missig now lives in Little Rock, Ak., while attending Lion's World Services for the Blind for career training. Rebecca is an inspiration to her family and friends because of her positive outlook and determination to create an independent life for herself despite her physical challenges.

The past 10 years have been very difficult for Rebecca. An insulin dependent diabetic since the age of two, the disease began to take its toll on her body – first with her vision (retinopathy), and then with the loss of her kidney function. In 2008, it briefly

culminated in dialysis before a kidney/pancreas transplant at Ochsner Medical Center in New Orleans. The road back to health post transplant was a difficult one for Rebecca. There were several hospitalizations to ensure the safety and continued health of her new “bits and pieces,” as Rebecca called her new kidney and pancreas. As her health and well-being were returning after the transplant, Rebecca was sadly losing her battle to retain the remaining vestiges of her vision. She endured numerous eye surgeries in her fight, but her vision was gone by the end of 2009. Rebecca accepted this new obstacle in her life and chose to move forward, although she was faced with a whole new set of challenges – living blind in a sighted world.

Rebecca has used a positive outlook to deal with mobility issues, technology relearning, learning Braille, career searching and a host of emotional adjustments in her quest for independence. She has tirelessly – but not always patiently – kept her eye on her goal of an independent life for herself.

In 2010, she also had to deal with the devastating and unexpected loss of her father, Tom Missig, a long-time Bright Light supporter who first introduced her to this wonderful organization. Accepting this award will have a special personal meaning for Rebecca, in that it is also a nod to her father's good works during his short lifetime. This award from Bright Light will enable Rebecca to continue her education and her steps toward an independent life and career. She is very appreciative of the generosity which resulted in this gift.