

# 2017 Oley Corporate Partnership Program

I have a disease called gastroparesis. Outwardly invisible, it means my stomach doesn't empty properly, which causes me **severe nausea and vomiting as well as pain** and gastric reflux. It began in 1985, became permanent in 1998, and **I will live with it for the rest of my life.**

Because of this condition, **I have learned things I never really wanted to know, like how to live with tubes** in my stomach and jejunum for venting and feeding, an IV in my chest or arm for hydration, and **not being able to eat the foods that I love.** My husband has learned a great deal as well, such as how to properly connect and disconnect an IV. We've both learned how to advocate for ourselves.

When I was sent home from the hospital in 1998, I had a central IV and was on home parenteral nutrition (HPN). **I was scared. I had never heard of gastroparesis or HPN,** and I felt alone. When the HPN ended with a serious infection, a G/J tube was placed. I knew nothing about feeding formulas, and the nausea never went away. Through a local doctor we learned about gastric stimulators to reduce the nausea, and through a GI support group we eventually learned about the Oley Foundation.

We attended our first Oley conference in St. Petersburg, FL, in 2009. Words can't describe what we saw and felt. **Here was a warm and inviting place where we could talk face-to-face with clinicians, other consumers of home nutrition,** other caregivers, and industry representatives. We attended presentations where we learned about the latest developments and techniques, and about traveling and living with our conditions. And the kids! How amazing to see them getting around wearing their backpacks with feedings, having a wonderful time with each other. We socialized with all of these people and formed friendships. **Finally, we were not alone.**



Mary S., on tube feeding

There is no fee for consumers and their families to join Oley, or to participate in any of its programs – including the conferences. This is possible only with the support of all of the friends of the Oley Foundation, from Corporate Partners to families and individuals. **I urge you to consider supporting the work of the Oley Foundation** by joining if you are not already a member, and through a monetary donation to help the Foundation “enrich the lives of those living with home intravenous nutrition and tube feeding through education, advocacy, and networking.”

—Mary S.

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**“Here was a warm and inviting place where we could talk face-to-face with ...other consumers”**

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We have attended every Oley annual conference since then. Each time we meet new friends, renew old friendships and learn new things. We have also attended two Oley regional conferences. We were so inspired by what we experienced that we asked to be Oley volunteer Ambassadors. **We wanted to help others on home tube feeding or IV nutrition,** and to help spread the word about this wonderful organization.



Mary and her husband, Bob, serve as Oley Ambassadors and Oley Trustees.



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