

# Lupus Society of Illinois

## LUPUS WARRIOR WEDNESDAY

June 1, 2022

My name is Mari Gonzalez. I'm a mom, daughter, sister, aunt, friend, Chicagoan, advocate, support group leader to 3 lupus support groups under Lupus Society of Illinois. Aside from all these titles I also live, and many times suffer with so many illnesses. I have SLE – Systemic Lupus Erythematosus, Fibromyalgia, Raynaud's Phenomenon, Sjögren's Syndrome, migraines, hypothyroidism, asthma, carpal tunnel, hiatal hernia, GERD, anxiety & depression.

I'm only 47 years old and living with these illnesses for many years now. Fortunately, I have a great support system within my family and friends. I consume more than 25 pills daily.

When I was diagnosed, I was referred to LSI by the rheumatologist that diagnosed me. He assured me that they would be the best at answering any of my questions. I had no clue what these autoimmune illnesses I was diagnosed with were. I didn't know what to expect or how my life would change.

Five years after being diagnosed with lupus, fibromyalgia and Sjögren's Syndrome I had to walk away from my employment. Since I'm under 50 years old and obtained a bachelor's degree social security refused to accept me. I had no income to purchase medicines that my



health insurance would not pay for. I applied to the LSI grant. Thankfully, they accepted my grant application.

Lupus Society of Illinois has heled me in so many ways. They are caring, compassionate and giving. They provide us lupus warriors and our support systems so much information. They provide us with educational events, walks to bring awareness, flyers throughout the city, support groups, webinars, newsletters, email blasts and so much more. I'm grateful to LSI. I no longer feel alone in this. I not only have my family, friends but also have the LSI staff as family to help me live with these illnesses.