

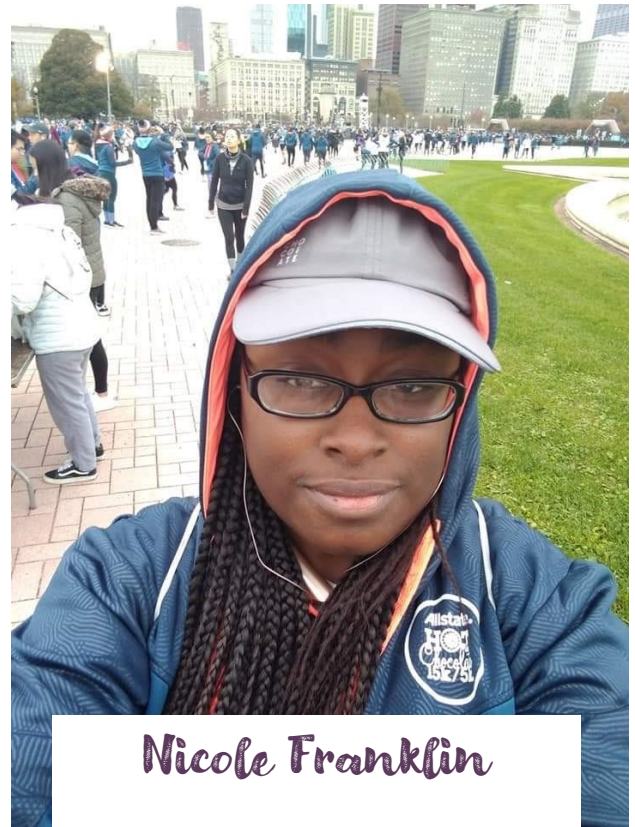
Lupus Society of Illinois

LUPUS WARRIOR WEDNESDAY

August 3, 2022

My story is not unique. I am a girl from the suburbs trying to make a difference in this world. My journey with LSI starts in 2019. I was participating in the South Suburbs 5k at Prairie State College where I graduated back in 2011. My cousin passed from lupus in 2010. The wounds from it are still fresh to me. I know that we are not supposed to have favorite relatives, but she was one of the best. She taught me a lot about life, and I hold those very close to the heart. She was young when she passed, having just reached her 40s, she showed that it mattered more with what you do with your time. It doesn't matter how the day you are born and day you die. It is the work you put in. She fell in love. She got 2 college degrees. She helped her family members through their own issues while living with her own health problems. I did the 5k in her honor that day.

In 2018, I joined a sorority geared toward plus size women. There are 2 founders. One of them, Moneisha, passed away from complications of lupus in 2015. Her story is told to all of us once we join the organization. The last few years of her life were the hardest. But she used that time to speak to others about this invisible disease. Most importantly, she discussed those who are left behind when they die. She wanted to make sure that there was support for family members who are marching alongside those with the disease. She had a great support system, but she always said she was privileged to have that. Not many people have a strong support system. This disease can take a toll on your mental and physical health. It can affect those parts in the members of the support system. I can say that when my cousin was dealing with it in the end, her family suffered and never recovered. Members sunk into deep depression and still haven't recovered. I walk for my cousin and those all around us.



Nicole Franklin

Being a member of the Associate Board has given me the education that I would never have gotten otherwise. I feel wiser about it and I feel that I can help more people by being a part of it. When I started, I was working in social media and I have been able to use that for fundraising, awareness, and just being present for those who are lupus warriors, supporters, and friends. For me, being on the Associate Board is about getting the word out about the disease. While not all of us have it, we all understand the toll it takes on the lives of those who do. We aspire to support, encourage, and honor the lupus fighters. It not only affects the person physically, but mentally as well. We help with support groups, education, and resources for those in the Lupie community. If you need anything considering this disease, do not be afraid to reach out to the Lupus Society of Illinois. We will find a way to help you.