

Richie Currier

I was born in 1978 and was raised in Winthrop, Massachusetts. Winthrop is a small seaside town bordering Boston to the northeast. My father grew up there and my parents still live there. My mother is originally from Ireland. I have a brother named Sean who is four years younger than I am. We have always been close. I'm quite proud of Sean, he's a Sailor in the United States Navy. Sean and I had the typical childhood and adolescence and we were always close growing up. My extended family also lives in Winthrop - my grandparents (on my Dad's side), aunts and uncles. I have many relatives in Ireland, too.

I was always active in sports as a kid. I particularly loved baseball, basketball and soccer. Most of my closest friends also participated in athletics and we had a lot of fun playing in games together and all the other typical kid stuff growing up. By the time I was in my mid teens I found that unlike earlier in my life I couldn't quite perform in sports at the same level as my friends. The changes came on gradually but steadily and by the time I was a senior I found myself spending more time supporting my friends who were playing than actively participating myself.

After graduating from Winthrop High School in 1996 I went to Salem State College to study business management and graduated in 2002.

While I was a freshman at Salem State I underwent a routine physical exam and the physician discovered some troubling signs. It took a while to sort it all out but eventually we found out why my physical abilities had deteriorated: Friedreich's Ataxia. None of us had ever heard of it, and nobody in my extended family had any form of Muscular Dystrophy.

Fortunately my case is on the milder side although it has slowly progressed in the years since I was first diagnosed. It didn't stop me from graduating from college or going on with my life, but I've had to make adaptations. Since 2003 I have used a wheelchair and my independence has been diminished.

Although this was a devastating diagnosis to receive at the time when so much of my life was ahead of me, I have adjusted with the support of my family and friends. Most importantly my wife Maria, who I began dating in and around the high school years. She was with me when I was first diagnosed and has been at my side ever since. We were married in 2005 and now we have three beautiful daughters, Gabriela, Mia and Audra.

Since 2004 I've worked full-time, five days a week, commuting from our suburban home to downtown Boston. I am an avid sports fan and I currently participate in bike riding and going to the gym. My work has afforded me the opportunity to actively participate and make a difference in people's lives.

