

## **DON'S SUCCESS STORY**

I was born on Thursday, August 7, 1969 with a condition called hydrocephalus, which is basically an accumulation of excess cerebrospinal fluid on the brain, which causes the head to swell to dangerous levels if left untreated. Because of that, I had to undergo surgery at 28 days old to have a shunt installed, which would be used to drain this excess fluid. Over the years, I've had to have that shunt replaced twice, the latest of which happened in 2013 while I was at university.

I was also told that without the shunt I would be either completely mentally retarded or dead by the age of 13.

I have a cousin in Ottawa who was born with the same condition. If you put us beside each other, you would have your work cut out for you trying to tell us apart. The difference is that my deformed hand that I have limited use of is on my left side (Thank God I'm right-handed).

Another problem Allan has that I thankfully do not have is the fact that Allan was born on August 2, 1966. This means that they didn't have the shunt technology when he was born and thus had to undergo eight brain operations in his first summer of life just to drain the excess fluid off. These eight unfortunate but necessary "tamperings" with Allan's brain left him where he has been confined to a wheelchair ever since. In addition, he is so completely mentally challenged that he can't even take care of himself on his own and was never able to attend school.

As for me, despite my hydrocephalus (which was controlled by medication until 1980) I was able to complete elementary school, complete junior high school, graduate from high school, graduate from community college (twice), take up painting and karate, complete a bachelor's degree from university, and am now seeking an opportunity to obtain a master's degree, which will hopefully lead me to independence as well as the possibility of making me fluent in no less than three languages (four if you count the universal language, music).

Of course none of this would have been possible without the help of God. I trust Him for everything and leave all my concerns with Him. I praise and thank Him for all the success He has given me so far in life and this has been working for me so far, so why change it?

I turned 51 on August 7 of this year.