**SAMPLE FUNDRAISING LETTER**

Friends, family, and acquaintances who care about me,

As many of you know, a couple of years ago, when I was traveling, I got sick. The initial infection passed within a couple of weeks, but as the months went on and I didn't recover. It took over a year, but this past March I was finally given a diagnosis: I have Myalgic Encephalomyelitis / Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS).

Until about a year ago, I didn't know that ME/CFS existed. I can imagine until today, you have not heard of it either. Since then, as you can imagine, I've learned a lot more.

In sum: ME/CFS is a multi-system disease that causes debilitating fatigue, pain, flu-like symptoms, cognitive impairment, an inability to withstand even minor physical exertion, and more. The state of research is limited: we don't know what causes it, and we don't know how to treat it. And most definitely, we don’t know how to cure it. For the most part, patients like me are left on our own to find any symptom relief.

Here are a few facts:

* An estimated 1 - 2.5 Million people in the US are affected with ME/CFS; globally, the estimate is over 20 Million people affected with ME/CFS.
* Approximately 75% of people with CFS are too ill to work, or attend school, and 25% are so severely ill that they are effectively bed-bound.
* The annual economic burden of ME/CFS in the US is estimated at $17-24 Billion

The scariest fact for me, however, is this: in 2017, NIH funding for research into ME/CFS was $15 Million. To put this in context, there are ~1.1M Americans living with HIV, and 2017 NIH funding for HIV/AIDS was $3 Billion. (This ignores private sector funding, which is extremely high for HIV/AIDS and low for ME/CFS.)

I consider myself to be on the very lucky end of the ME/CFS spectrum: I am still able to work full-time -- both because I have a more mild case, and because I have a desk job -- and I have the safety net of both family support and financial resources. Many, many people with this disease are not so lucky. Many do not have family support or financial resources. Isolation and desperation are painful.

There is a light of hope for patients around the world. Open Medicine Foundation (OMF), a non-profit, is dedicated to funding and facilitating ME/CFS research, and they've been doing fantastic work, including funding a research center at Stanford and one at Harvard. **From now through November 27, a generous donor will be tripling donations made to OMF.**

So, for me, and for the millions of others living with this illness -- consider [donating](http://tracking.etapestry.com/t/36041326/1458899593/78456335/0/79778/?x=84f40040) today. And please feel free to pass this on!

With love,