



Leah Dyck

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Hey again,

This afternoon I would like to tell you about another [Fresh Food Weekly](#) recipient who is actually the exact same age as me. As always, her story is really upsetting because it highlights an array of problems in "the system".

Firstly, this woman has a diagnosis for a crippling disease with no cure and it's going to take at least three years for her to get any kind of financial aid because three years is how long it takes to "process" her application. Secondly, when she applied to get financial aid, one of the Barrie case workers was condescending to her. And thirdly, even if she does get approved for ODSP in 2025, she'll be lucky to get even \$900/month... and I know this because it's what many others have shown me.

This is her story...

"I've recently been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS) and I'm only 33-years-old," the Barrie woman told me. MS is a disease where the nervous system attacks the nerve fibres in the brain and spinal cord. When this happens, it causes inflammation, and that destroys nerve cell processes, as well as alters electrical messages in the brain. Some individuals may be affected mildly, while others may lose their ability to write, speak or even walk. Without treatment, most people with MS will develop disease symptoms that will gradually worsen over time.

"Treatments are in the talks," she said. "However, I have so many appointments that I'm unable to make because of financial reasons - I simply don't have a way to get there most of the time. And the fact that they schedule so many of them at ridiculous times in the morning makes them even harder to get to. I had an MRI this morning at 3:15 a.m., and I don't have anyone who can drive me. My grandmother used to help me with getting to appointments but she passed away in February. So I'm pretty much on my own now. Sometimes I'm even asked to have someone drive me home, but I can't do that as I don't have anyone to drive me. And I'd rather not bother people at 3 a.m.

When I get flair ups, I can't do very much. I've applied for ODSP, but they've shoved me off onto Ontario Works (welfare). They told me I had to apply through them first - which is fine, I understand there's a system. However, I've heard this process takes three years. Also, when I went through the application process for ODSP, I was told by the worker (here in Barrie) that I didn't look sick so I shouldn't get my hopes up. I don't look sick?! I was walking with a cane! I can barely get out of bed on a daily basis, and I can't walk without assistance or assistance devices. Every single day is a struggle."

This woman went on to explain that she's applied for our meal box program and has only received it once, which she said was the best thing she could ask for; "the gentleman who dropped it off was kind. Everything in it was great."

"Life is hard when you have a crippling disease which makes it so you can barely work, and then everything else follows suit... when you can't work, there's a lack of finances, which means there's a lack of food, and other items you need.

But the meal box helps. Thank you for everything you do! I appreciate it."

I can't even begin to understand how hard life is for this woman, but I do know that every day she struggles to find enough food to eat. And I also know that some of the staff at ODSP make people like her, with diagnosed disabilities, feel even worse about themselves by making rude comments such as "you don't look sick". I've witnessed it myself many times.

If you're reading this today and you would like to help this woman, and others like her by sponsoring a meal box for \$45, please send me a PM. The September meal box is valued at \$120 and will be delivered next week on Wednesday. You can also learn more about our monthly meal box delivery program by visiting our website at: www.FreshFoodWeekly.com

Thank you again for your time in reading her story. ❤️

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