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Leah Dyck

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So today I would like to share with you all another story of one of the recipients on the [Fresh Food Weekly](#) program. I think, with this man's story, it's nobody's fault - he was dealt a bad hand in terms of his health. It could have happened to anyone. That being said, now he lives on \$300/month and it's unlikely his financial situation will ever improve. So him and his young son will receive a meal box each month. This is his struggle:

"Three years ago, my wife divorced me. I was back in school as a mature student during this time and I didn't have the money to get a new place. So I got a small loan from my aunt, and found a place suitable for me and my eight-year-old son. After my schooling, I started a job and started to work and within two years, I started to have money in my bank account again.

But just after Christmas, on December 27th of last year, I had just finished making dinner for my son and we were just about to watch a TV show together. I was talking to him but he had a weird look on his face and I couldn't make out why - I couldn't even make out the words he was saying to me. So, he took my phone and FaceTimed his mom and told her that daddy was speaking alien. He gave me the phone and I remember her saying "do I have to get you to a hospital?" I said, "no, the computer wasn't working properly" - for some reason I was fixated on the computer. I then got up and had a shower and when I got out of the shower, my ex and my mother were there.

My ex-wife took me to the emergency ward at the hospital and my mom looked after our son. A lot of that night is a blur to me but my ex did videotape some of it, that way I'd be aware of how I was. I'm a big guy and to see myself looking like a child with the way I was acting, and talking, it was probably one of the scariest things I've ever seen. The doctors rushed me in because they figured out I was having a stroke. It turns out, I had a hemorrhagic stroke. For those who don't know what that is, it's when your brain bleeds into your skull.

Since then, it's been nine months and I've been riddled with the after effects of a stroke. For the first little while, my speech was really affected along with a lot of the sensation on the right side of my body. I was in pain and I'm still in pain now. Prior to the stroke, I had issues with my heart. My blood pressure was almost double the average of a normal person. Now the doctors are seeing that my body is worse off than they thought. We didn't catch a few issues because we were only focused on the heart. It's kind of like you have to take a step back to see the whole picture instead of just up-close, staring at what you think is the issue. So along with the after effects of this stroke, I now have found out that I have a spine that is deteriorating and have issues with my blood cells, which are causing me to cough up blood 20-30 times a day. To look at me, you wouldn't see any of it other than the mobility issues though.

When I saw the email asking if we would write our story because ^{Groups} it might help someone else, I struggled over it quite a bit not because I don't want to help someone else - I'd love to help but because I hide a lot of this from my son. I keep him updated on my progress and he helps me with my physiotherapy. Reliving it in my head and all the stuff that I've gone through and still am going is also tough.

I suffer from depression, sometimes it gets the better of me. I start thinking about being a failure to my son, and being a burden to my family. Then I start thinking about how I'm going to pay rent and buy clothing for my kid. I haven't worked in eight months and I'm not out of the woods and from what I've learned, I'm not going to have a very healthy life. But how am I going to pay for anything? I've used up all the money I've saved in my bank account. I've had to swallow my pride and let my parents pay for the hydro bills and groceries at times. I'm now on Ontario Works (welfare) because I have no other options and it pays for my medication which keeps me alive.

So, if swallowing my pride in telling my story helps even one person, then it's worth it. So, I pray this reaches one person even if just to give them hope because without hope you're not living."

If you're reading this man's story, and you would like to help him or help another family in need, you can sponsor them with a meal box for only \$45. The [#Thanksgiving](#) meal box is going out next week and includes a Turkey and a lot of other great Thanksgiving staples. Please send me a PM if you would like to donate ❤️.

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