

DISCOVER THE COURAGEOUS FACES OF DISABILITY

By Sherita Deal

Social Security District Manager in Dover, DE

Social Security is committed to the principles and spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which improves the lives of our beneficiaries and our employees who have disabilities. We are proud to say that we've been helping people with disabilities for over 25 years.

We also want you to see and hear from the people who rely on Social Security disability benefits to not just survive, but thrive, as active members of our communities. Our *Faces and Facts of Disability* website highlights the real life stories of people who have disabilities.

The newest person we are featuring on our *Faces and Facts of Disability* website is Lynne Parks. She is an artist from Baltimore, Maryland. First diagnosed with metastatic fibrosarcoma at age 14, she has lived with this illness for nearly 35 years. It started in her face and moved to different parts of her body, including her abdomen and leg. She also has various tumors on her shoulder and arm.

Inflammatory responses, infections, and new tumors are complications that Lynne deals with every day. "Because of the tumors, I have limited use of my left arm," Lynne said. "I have weakness in my legs. There's fatigue because my immune system has taken such a big hit from the cancer and the cancer treatments. I get sick all the time. There might be a day that I can be at home and resting and I'll try to make the best of it. I'll wake up, fix breakfast and eat, and that takes a while because of my physical limitations, but also because of my first tumor that was in my face."

Having been helped by Social Security, Lynne tries to help others. "I'm also helping people who have issues learn to cope with them, because they see in me someone as a

role model, essentially. Life without Social Security benefits, it's a horror story, because I imagine myself on the streets.”

The disability benefits Lynne receives are a crucial resource for her quality of life. Our disability programs continue to be a mainstay in the lives of many people — people just like you. Social Security disability beneficiaries are among the most severely impaired people in the country. It’s something that can happen to anyone when least expected.

We invite you to learn the facts about the disability insurance program, and see and hear these stories of hardship and perseverance at www.socialsecurity.gov/disabilityfacts.