

## Siobhan B

### Her Story:

Siobhan was born in South Africa and immigrated to Canada with her family in the 90s. From a young age she knew she was destined for a life on the stage. She began dance lessons at three and had landed her first major role in a ballet at ten. From then on, she dedicated her life to making it as a ballet dancer and by sixteen she was dancing professionally! Unfortunately, just a few years later she'd have to quit her dream job as her body seemingly shut down. Doctors couldn't understand why her health declined so quickly. Some convinced her it was 'all in her head' while others just brushed her off. She consulted more than ten different doctors over a period of seven years and was finally diagnosed with ME at the Complex Chronic Diseases Program at BC Women's Hospital.

The team at the CCDP helped her to change her lifestyle and to live within her 'energy envelope'. She started a series of medications and learned the necessary pacing skills to carry on as normal as possible while living with a complex chronic illness. There have been ups and downs but some complications have been the cause of some major setbacks. It just never seems to end and the trauma of having to rebuild, fail, and try something different is rather insufferable. She is no longer satisfied with symptom management as a treatment plan and is extremely passionate about making positive change for those living with ME and chronic illness.

With long-covid patients being diagnosed with ME every day, it is now more critical than ever that these patients be taken seriously. Their lives as they know it are over unless we change how the current system is run. Siobhan feels it is her duty to contribute to this campaign as she is one of the lucky ones with mild to moderate ME. There are tens of thousands of British Columbians who are hidden in their homes unable to function in society, let alone fight for the cause. It is exciting to be working directly with our MLAs to ensure that the proper changes are made to our medical and social systems!