

## **Erana Pille - Stroke Survivor**

On April 3, 2017, three months before her 50th birthday, Erana Pille had a stroke. Erana was finishing work and suddenly lost all sensation on the left side of her body.

She recalls having to hold on to the walls to be able to make her way to a chair to sit down. Erana did not initially know what was happening to her body. Erana was admitted to the Champlain Regional Stroke Centre at The Ottawa Hospital (TOH), Civic campus. While in hospital, numerous investigations were completed to determine the cause of her stroke, which was determined to be vasculitis (inflammation of blood vessels).

Erana recalls feeling fortunate that her mother was by her side throughout her recovery journey, and especially to hear important information from the treatment team, as she felt that her short-term memory was particularly affected post-stroke. Having a support person, such as her mother allowed Erana to better understand what was happening.

Unfortunately, Erana was left with stroke deficits that affected the use of her left arm and leg. Erana transitioned from The Ottawa Hospital to Bruyère's Inpatient Stroke Rehabilitation program for specialized therapy. Prior to this transition of care, Erana recalls feeling happy and confident that she would be going somewhere to get further help, yet she was still concerned about the unknowns of her future.

Erana shared more of her story with the CRSN, captured below.

### **What do you feel you have accomplished through your stroke recovery?**

Erana recalled identifying the following goals while at Stroke Rehab: Maintaining her independence to live at home alone; being able to walk on her 50th birthday; having no railings on her bed, and being able to bathe in a regular bathtub. Erana also identified now having an increased awareness of [risk factors for stroke](#).

### **What three things would you tell a person that just had a stroke?**

"I know that having a stroke is a difficult thing... at the very beginning you feel that your life is falling apart, but don't give up hope."

"Through your journey make yourself a lot of friends."

"Try to surround yourself with all the people that will help you, especially family."

### **What is your one key message about your experience with stroke?**

"My key message would be no matter what life throws at you what matters is how you react to it; keep a positive attitude, there will be hills and valleys and potholes - it's how you react and what you do with it that makes the difference."

Erana has made a tremendous recovery. She has regained her ability to walk, use her left arm, and she continues to live independently. Nevertheless, Erana expressed that there are some things that I've had to accept that I cannot do anymore but she has found different ways to

continue to engage in activities that she enjoys. Erana has had to adapt to changes in her energy levels post-stroke and needs to be mindful of pacing herself between activities. She explained that what she used to do in one day may now take two to three days.

Overall, throughout Erana's stroke journey she shared that social connections and new friendships made her recovery more manageable. Erana is now a regular member of the weekly [peer support](#) Coffee Pot at Bruyère.

“This is why I show up every Wednesday afternoon to Coffee Pot; to do something that I immensely enjoy. The point is to socialize and interact with others, share stories, relate, and learn from one another's lived experience - the good, the bad, the ugly.”

\*The CRSN gives our sincere thanks to Erana for sharing her stroke journey.

