

RAINBOW CLIENT

Renae's Rehab & Recovery

Interview by Kimberly Paetzold, editor



Wedding Plans...

Renae Godfrey has come a long way since her accident over 12 years ago. Sitting in front of me, I see a vibrant and happy young woman enjoying the planning of her wedding. She's excited about her future – and she should be! This September, 2005, Renae will say "I do" to the man she loves.

It hasn't always been roses for Renae. At 17 years-old, Renae sustained a traumatic brain injury when the car in which she was riding hit a parked train. In Renae's words, *"It was 9:30 or 10:00 at night; we were driving down a dirt road. The driver of the vehicle ran 2 stop signs and struck a parked train. My last memories include seeing the stop signs, and then blank. The car did go underneath the train; the driver and I both survived."* That accident took place in December of 1993, and Renae wasn't wearing a seat belt. Rendered unconscious by the impact, she was lifted by life flight to St. Vincent's Hospital in Toledo where she stabilized. Renae then transferred to Catherine McAuley Health Center to receive further rehabilitation.

On March 6, 1994, Renae came to Rainbow for her long road towards recovery. She was admitted into Stony



(Left) Renae's fiancé – Todd and Renae (right)

Creek – one of Rainbow's residential homes. In October of 1994, Renae transitioned into the special education program at school and received A's & B's in her classes. During this time, she made great strides towards independence with regards to daily living activities including initiating medication, preparing her meals, doing laundry and complying with her home program.

Because of her progress, Renae applied for and got a job working for Meijer part-time. She graduated high school in June of '96 and later that year moved into an apartment in Rainbow's Semi-Independent Living Apartment Program.

Independent living was hard on Renae, even though she continued to participate in individual and group therapy sessions. She relapsed and was sent back to the residential group home environment. In her words, "I did something to threaten my safety, and I needed more help". So Renae entered the Pediatric program in Farmington Hills. She had to prove that she could go to work every day and progress – not fall behind again. As Renae put it, "I

was running away from my problems, and I needed to face them."

About 10 months later, Renae re-entered Rainbow's Semi-Independent Living Program and graduated to townhouse living. According to Merrily Pritchard, RN, CCM of Pritchard Case Management, Inc., *"Renae has done exceptionally well. She has reached a level of independence that no one would have expected in the early stages of her recovery."* It was during this time, that Renae met her fiancé – Todd. Now dating for 3 years, they have an apartment together.

When I asked Renae about her wedding plans, she said they were planning a small wedding in September. Looking forward to the wedding she dreamed of as a little girl, Renae stated, *"It's a lot of work and planning. My dad is going to walk me down the aisle. I always dreamed of being the princess, and it's going to be nice."*

Currently on a temporary leave of absence from Meijer Deli Department, Renae is recovering from a foot injury. She has her driver's license and looks forward to having a career someday that helps others with traumatic brain injuries. In her words, *"I would like to help people with Traumatic Brain Injuries in their recovery. I would have to progress a little more, but if I could be an assistant someday, I would enjoy it. To be an inspiration and tell my story would be a great feeling."*

Renae - I think that's been accomplished! ♦

Renae's favorite things...

SHERBY – A one-year-old orange tabby cat, named after her favorite ice cream while in the hospital. Renae always ate orange sherbert with her medications and thought it would be a great name for her kitty.

