

LACE UP. WALK.



CYSTIC FIBROSIS.



Austin, 15, who has CF

“Sometimes I wish people realized that breathing for me is not like breathing for you. Let me show you. Please take your hand and gently cover your lips. Take a deep breath.

**That’s what it feels like for me with every breath I take.”**

That is how Austin, a teen with cystic fibrosis, explains CF to other people. He doesn’t hesitate to tell people that CF includes frequent hospitalizations and about 30 pills every day. Since he began using the vest treatment as a young boy to clear his airways, Austin has logged about 3,000 hours, or more than 125 24-hour days.

But, Austin rarely complains about his disease. Rather, he views it as just a part of his life — a disease that he works to accept. As he says, CF is with him everywhere he goes, but he doesn’t let it weigh him down. He regularly works out at the gym, is a member of his high school STEM program and the robotics team, and rows on the crew team. And, Austin is an active Great Strides fundraiser.



“My family calls Great Strides walk day the most important day of the year,” said Austin. “It is great to talk to people that help fundraise to find a cure for CF. I look forward to it every year.”

Austin’s entire family joins in on their national family team, “Team Feets.” The name is a nod to Austin’s infancy when he regularly stuck his feet out of his crib, as well as to his feet today, which are currently a size 14. In addition to forming a team, his family also hosts an annual Great Strides after party.

“Every year at Great Strides, I get to focus on positivity and celebrate with my family and 100 of the most amazing people – people that support the Foundation on the path to finding a cure,” said Austin.

Since 2000, Team Feets has raised more than \$500,000 for Great Strides with nearly 100 participants walking each year.

“Our family and our team are hopeful. We’re hopeful that we’re changing the future for people with CF, not just by raising awareness, but by supporting the Foundation,” said Laura, Austin’s mom.

Austin’s family, especially his younger sister, Kate, are with him every step of the way.

“From a young age, Kate wanted to help fundraise and generate awareness about CF,” said Laura. “But it’s more than that. Kate is protective of Austin and his health. She realizes that CF is a serious disease and she wants to help him through it in a big-hearted, loving way.”

While Austin is no stranger to the challenges of living with CF, like persistent coughing, frequent hospitalizations and the tough reality of constant self-care, Austin stays positive.

“I know that Great Strides, the Foundation, my family and our team are helping to change my future and the future of CF. All this gives me hope and makes me excited about what is now possible.”

**To learn more about CF Fighters like Austin, join Great Strides or learn more about the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, visit [www.cff.org/greatstrides](http://www.cff.org/greatstrides).**