

(Subhead)

Being sick throughout her childhood, a Chinese youngster is studying hard to earn her doctoral degree.

Reporter Chunxiang Jin/New York news

Ever since she was five, Angela Lui has to deal with systemic erythematosus lupus (lupus). Now 31, as a young woman Angela stated that complications from the disease, countless hospitalizations, and strange looks from classmates accompanied her throughout her childhood. "I don't remember too much about my childhood. Maybe it was just too painful to think, so I choose to forget subconsciously." The only thing she remembered was to play with her older sister and younger brother, and father was a good cook, as well as mother was always on her side to help her to overcome the fear of her flare unexpectedly. Currently, studying for her doctoral degree in educational psychology, Angela would like to help other traumatized children.

At present, Angela Lui is enrolled in a doctoral program for educational psychology at University at Albany, SUNY. On July 8 at the Lupus Health and Wellness Day, she expressed that the disease deprived her of her childhood. When the immune system was under attack; she developed fever and bronchial dilatation. Every day she was in her sick bed. Rarely had she made it to school, but nobody wanted to make friend with her worrying that lupus is contagious. They all talked behind her back. "I hated those endless visits to the clinic. Every day was a struggle to survive, and I didn't even know how long I would live."

Since the parents were new immigrants, their English was poor. They were totally helpless with their child's strange disease. They had to learn about the New York City's medical system all over again with patience and perseverance, and then they found the source for treatment eventually. Angela stated, "No matter what happened, my parents are always my warm haven." Being more familiar with the disease, she was constantly on the Internet to find all kinds of information on lupus. Although so far, the medical profession cannot explain the exact cause of the occurrence of this disease, through the process of communicating with physicians, she begins to accept the "don't know" answer. Deep down in her heart she has been hopeful and convinced that she has the courage to live on.

Under the care of the whole family, she went through the dark days of her life, and became stronger. Angela said that she is working on her doctoral degree in upstate Albany all by herself, even though the pressure of studying triggers her fever from time to time, affecting her mind to think, and with extreme fatigue, she knows how to take care of herself. She arranges time to visit her physician and has taken up painting to relax her mind. The most important thing is if there is a situation, her family will be the first to arrive. She expressed much gratitude to her family, "Knowing my family is not far away, it is a great comfort to me." Classmates in the University are very friendly. They all take the initiation to communicate with her. For now, she is going to receive her doctoral degree in educational psychology. She hopes that she can contribute her knowledge to society and help more children who have been subjected to extreme physical or psychological pressure since childhood.

Owing to her sickness, she was afraid to travel. Now she is planning to have a break through after graduation. She is preparing herself to travel overseas. Angela said that as long as she listens to her body, keeping a healthy life style, avoid tremendous amount of stress, and take the initiation to visit doctors to establish a personal "medical team", even though she has lupus, she can face everyday life with a smile and enjoy the beauty of living.