

## **Sonya, diagnosed at age 11**

**i am 23 years old.** my name is sonya and ive been suffering since i was 11. you can do the math. it sucks. i never finished 6th grade. i dont know how i still went to seventh... that was the year i was diagnosed. no one believed an eleven year old who wasnt just being lazy... until i couldnt get out of bed and couldnt stop crying, then my mother finally took me to the doctor. i think at that point my father still did not believe me. testing and testing and testing... middle school and high school. blood work was not fun, esp coming back to school and having track marks... that didnt help me getting made fun of.... and being pretty , nobody believed i was sick, i didnt look sick. i looked good! but i was really sick...

im not even on oral medications anymore for lupus because the secondary illnesses were too much for my body... i get cortisone shots at the worst times of the year, they help for a little while... im a studio art major so i express and advocate lupus awareness all the time... but its still hard to get people to care. its hard to go to all my classes everyday at a demanding university, but i do and im a fighter. i also have a handicap parkin pass, people dont get that because i look fine.. well its invisible asshole... im sick of the campus police harrassing me for it. anyways im living and ive had shingles 5 times this year but i will survive and move on.