

## 2008 Embracing Hope Grant Applicant

I met my best friend and husband 8 years ago, to my surprise he came with a wheelchair. I had just moved from Iowa to Portland, Oregon when we met. I was excited to make a new friend, seeing as I only knew a few people. However, Chris had other plans. He soon won me over with his sense of humor and amazing outlook on life. Before I know it I no longer saw the wheelchair, just a confident, strong, kind and compassionate man. Luckily, he saw something similar in me. We have been inseparable ever since.

We married on October 7, 2006 to the delight of both our families (our long courtship was a source of ribbing at every family gathering). As we held each others hands during our wedding ceremony the minister read the line "These are the hands that will tenderly hold your children." We looked at each other unable to contain our tears. We were hopeful but unsure as to our future as parents. Before we married, this uncertainty was a source of concern for Chris. He did not want his disability to hold me back. But in the end it was my decision, I knew that I may not be a mother if I married him and that was my choice to make. While my desire for our child is quite strong, it is not because I need to be a mother, but rather I want to be the mother of the love of my life's child.

Chris was injured when he was 14 years old in an auto accident. He ruptured his aorta and severed his spine at T11. The location of his spinal cord injury has compromised his fertility. We have consulted with specialists, who are optimistic that TESE combined with IVF is a viable option for us.

We have worked hard over the years to buy our home and build a small nest egg. Chris works as the general management and mobility specialist, at a company that provides people with disabilities mobility options such as scooters, accessible vans, wheelchairs, driving apparatus, etc. I work as a restaurant manager for a small local restaurant. If we are lucky enough to have a baby, we will become a one income family. That coupled with the expense of TESE and IVF is quite frightening.

Thank you for taking the time to consider us for this grant.

Christina and Christopher