



# Parley

Parents And Relatives  
Listening and Empathising  
with You

## Danny's Story

I was born on December 16<sup>th</sup>, 1987 in St.Catharines, Ontario, Canada. At the age of 3 years old I was diagnosed with Hydrocephalus, a very non severe form of Spina Bifida. Growing up I was into sports. I loved Hockey and Soccer. When body contact came into play, I was forced off the ice. That made me sad, however I still had soccer and I dreamt about playing professional one day, like my dad had many years ago. I would train for hours on end, everyday, both day and night. When I was 15, I went one month with a horrible headache, unlike any headache I had ever had. After one month of absolute pain I told my mom we had to go to the hospital, so off we went. After several CT Scans, and MRI's we sat down with the Neurosurgen who made it clear that the shunt had broken and I was rushed in for emergency surgery just two hours after the fact. The surgery went well and I was back home and in school within a week. All was going well until just a couple weeks after the surgery when the shunt broke again and I was rushed back to the hospital for yet another revision. It became clear, at this point, that I would no longer be able to play soccer at the competitive levels that I wanted to play at. That crushed me emotionally, ' like a piano player losing his hands' I didn't know what to do. I went to a long period of depression when life wasn't all that great and I was extremely sad. It was at the age of 15, in high school, when I met Simone from Denmark and Mathilde from France who were on year long Rotary exchanges in Canada. They inspired me to apply for the exchange program and so I did. I was originally chosen to go to France, which I was really excited about. Two months later I found out that because of my Hydrocephalus, France had rejected me. I was then given the choice between Japan and Brasil. I chose Brasil, and little did I know it would be that year in Brasil that would change my life.

I began singing when I was just 11. It was through our small town church pianist, Lisa Brillion formerly from 'The Phantom Of The Opera', that I started off when one day she approached my mom and asked if I might like vocal lessons. At that point in my life all I wanted to do was play soccer, however the music was kind of fun as well so I

did both. In Brasil I found my true passion for music and what it had to offer. I started composing in Brasil and playing a lot of guitar. I pulled inspiration from everywhere. The people, sights, sounds, food, culture. It was incredibly life defining and has made me who I am today.

Now currently in my third year at University, as a vocal major, I sing in a band with my brother, and cousin (along with two other friends of ours). We are currently working in the studio with a man by the name of Mark Lalama, who plays piano on the famous Canadian program 'Canadian Idol' and we have written a song called 'The Simple Things' that the Hydrocephalus/Spina Bifida Association (which I am the young ambassador of) of Toronto, Ontario, Canada has chosen to use as their promo song. We will be recording it in April and then shooting a music video for it before the summer is over.

I'm excited for the song and video, and can't wait to build a bigger awareness for both Hydrocephalus and Spina Bifida. I hope anyone reading this will feel free to contact me whenever. Thank you so much for listening, and never give up the fight.

'IF IT DOESN'T KILL YOU, IT WILL ONLY MAKE YOU STRONGER'