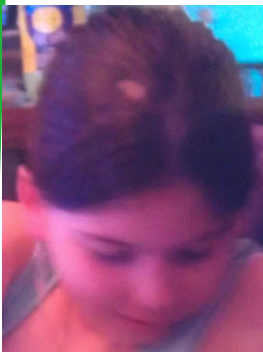


Who you are is about the inside not about what you look like on the outside, love yourself no matter what for everything you are, inside and out.

My name is Danielle, I'm 17 years old, I was 8-9 years old when I found the first sign of alopecia on my head. I had no idea what it was, so I showed my mum and straight away she panicked and went crazy and looked for a doctor who could tell us what was happening. We went to at least 10 different hospitals/clinics/doctors looking for answers, only one knew what was happening. He told me I had Alopecia Areata. I had no idea what that was so it didn't faze me much,. My parents took it harder then I did, because I was young I didn't really understand what was happening to me.



By the time I was 10 I had my full head of hair back. When I was 11, I went on a 3 month holiday to Greece. Just before we left my hair had begun to fall out again , I still thought nothing of it, during my holiday all my hair had grown back. I got back to Australia just as I was about to graduate from primary school and enter my new life in high school. Over the summer break, all of my hair except for a very small ponytail had fallen out (The doctor called it Alopecia Areata Totalis) but again it hadn't fazed me.

Looking back and knowing myself now, I wonder why I didn't have a massive meltdown. I was starting high school a teenage girl, and losing all my hair didn't bother me at all..

One night about 2 weeks before I was to start high school, I overheard my parents talking, they were talking about homeschooling me until my hair grew back or we had enough money to buy a wig. I didn't understand what the big deal was. I walked into their room where they were talking and sat on the bed, mum in tears and dad almost in tears. He explained to me what they had been talking about and asked for my opinion on the matter, I was really confused and said 'Its only hair!'

My mum didn't know what to say and my dad couldn't believe it, he told me how brave he thought I was. I started high school wearing a black bandana, everyone looked at me like I was some sort of freak, I'm a very shy person and had a bit of trouble making friends because of it.

Mum took me to hair appointments nearly every week, we tried everything they had recommended; several different types of medication all with the side affect of weight gain, I tried the home remedy of garlic and milk and not stressing but I was an 11 year old I had nothing to stress about. After a while I told my mum to stop spending money on all the medication that was suppose to help me within a month of taking it, after 6 months not one hair on my head had grown.

I decided to let it be and if it was in my fate for it to grow back then it would and if not I would have to adjust, after stopping the meds, my hair started to grow back, all of it. I was growing up and was really happy about it, by the end of year 8, I had a full head of healthy hair for the first time in about 6 years. I'm 18 in about a month and my hair has never been this healthy, I have not had any sign of alopecia areata in the past 5 years.

A couple of months ago I got the courage to tell my boyfriend about it, he is the first person I've ever told, he's been very supportive of me, I should have told him earlier.

Having alopecia made me a stronger person, I learned a lot about life, and a lot about myself.

www.aaaf.org.au

I've become a braver person because of it.


Australia Alopecia Areata Foundation Inc.
Alopecia Areata
..... it's life changing