



CARLY BUNYAN
Track and Field
University of Maine
Anthropology
Nominated by: Ann Maxim

Carly Bunyan grew up in a close-knit family in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. She's the oldest of four children, loves any type of physical activity, and her passion is working with people. She felt like she was on top of the world when she entered the University of Maine on a full track scholarship that she had earned after setting the provincial record in the triple jump in not one, but in *five* different age categories as a child. Her freshman year in college was great: she was doing well in the classroom, her jumping was going well, and she continually marveled at both the beauty of the campus and the great friends that surrounded her. But things began to change the summer following her freshman year at Maine. She started to have terrible headaches, but her family history of migraines led doctors to conclude that she, too, was a migraine sufferer. The headaches continued throughout the fall and were increasing in length and duration when in March 2002, she had a seizure in her apartment. She was rushed to the hospital, and when she regained consciousness, the doctors informed her that she had a tumor approximately the size of an orange in the right frontal lobe of her brain. This tumor was malignant.

In May 2002, Carly returned home to Nova Scotia to begin treatment. The next year was a blur of surgeries, chemotherapy, radiation treatments, and MRI's. She lost her hair, she lost her eyebrows, and she lost a lot of weight, but she never lost her spirit or her determination to overcome cancer. In the fall of 2003, she returned to college and to athletics only to find that her memory was not what it had once been. For the first time, she struggled in the classroom until her athletic advisor got her involved in the UMaine Onward Program that helped students with disabilities. Her cheery disposition had disappeared, and she sensed that something wasn't quite right. Excess fluid had been building up in her brain, and it was creating pressure that affected both her mood and her memory. She had a shunt installed that drained the fluid into her stomach. Because they had to cut through her stomach muscles to insert the shunt, her training regimen had been set back once again.

Fast forward to Spring 2005. Carly is proving that she is a survivor. The current season has been a great one for her; she has switched majors to anthropology which she feels to be her true passion, she is volunteering with the Canadian Cancer Society, and she is helping her old high school track team. During her battle with cancer, she drew strength from Lance Armstrong and his story of cancer survival. By telling her story she hopes to inspire others to do what Lance Armstrong inspired in her: "to be positive and to never give up."