

Amy De Silva

Hello, my name is Amy de Silva. I'm twelve years old. As long as I can remember, I have lived with the effects of CMT (Charcot-Marie-Tooth) disorder that strikes one in every 2,500 people of all ages. CMT is a progressive, inherited peripheral neuropathy that causes people not to be able to use their hands/arms and legs/feet like most people do. For me, CMT affects my hands by not allowing me to raise my wrists or fingers. I can't do everyday things like open a carton of milk, put in my earrings, or button my pants. I always used to feel sorry for myself just because I was different and sometimes made fun of, but now I realize that I am not a victim of this disease, I am a survivor!

Through God's grace, he has given me a beautiful voice that I intend to use to help people who have struggled with physical or emotional problems by becoming a music therapist; my dream job. I always say I would never give up my voice just to have "normal" hands. That is still true for me today. I can do so much with my voice for the good of mankind and I know that is not God's plan for me to give that all up just to be "normal."

In 2007 I won the Burt Wood Idol singing contest. One of the judges was Massachusetts State Representative Tom Calter (12th district, Plymouth). When I was done singing he said, "Amy that was so beautiful. Your parents should be very proud! You should bottle up that song and send it to our troops." So right now I am using my voice to send a song called *American Tears* to Iraq and Afghanistan to help bring a smile to all our men and women fighting for our country. I have extreme admiration for all our troops serving our country. Without them, our right to freedom and right to research cures for CMT could be taken away. I only hope that I have been able to brighten a day. I can honestly say that I know what it is like to go through physical and emotional trauma, pain and therapy, however, I say to our troops to remember that they are not victims, they are survivors. Change will come, and with it bring about a purpose they can embrace.

I wish to thank Plank Publishing for the nonprofit rights to record *American Tears*.

I thank the following people for their continued love and support; without them, I would be nothing.

- Massachusetts State Representative Tom Calter (12th district, Plymouth);
- Ms. Lorna Brunelle and the staff at the Burt Wood School of Performing Arts;
- Ms. Marianne Oien (who gave me the *American Tears* song in 3rd grade and encouraged me to keep on singing);
- Jimmy and Karen Hoban, Shooters Restaurant, Wareham, MA, and

- most of all, my parents Catherine and Bill and my brother Will.

Thank you, because of all if you, I can cry *American Tears*.