

Client: The Stroke Association
Source: The Bath Chronicle (Main)
Date: 10 December 2009
Page: 7
Circulation: 18415
Size: 300cm2
Value: 516



Giving voice to a wonderful cause

Laura Tremelling
Health Reporter

l.tremelling@bathchron.co.uk

A woman from Bath who has battled back from the trauma of a stroke is looking forward with hope.

This year will be the first time that Daniella Gonzalez has written her Christmas cards since suffering the stroke almost three years ago.

She will also be entertaining audiences with the Bath Chorus Choir this weekend after regaining her singing voice.

Daniella said: "My handwriting has been slowly getting better and even though I find it very tiring to write, I am determined to put a few short messages in cards."

Daniella, 36, from Bear Flat, had a stroke three years ago this Christmas while packing to go on a holiday.

Her boyfriend had found her lying on the bedroom floor, and when she did not respond to him, he called an ambulance.

She was taken to hospital, where she stayed for three months as doctors were unaware what caused it.

In the months that followed, she lost all speech, making it hard for her to communicate with anyone.

It was later discovered that the stroke was due to a blood disorder called Hughes Syndrome (commonly known as sticky blood syndrome), which can cause problems such as strokes and deep vein thrombosis.

Daniella is keen to raise awareness of the condition and said: "Not too many people have heard of Hughes Syndrome even though lots of people carry the gene."

Following weekly music rehabilitation sessions, Daniella got her voice back and has even been able to resume her interest in singing.

She joined the choir in January, and on Saturday will be performing at The Forum with Hayley Westenra.

Daniella said: "From a young age I have always been in choirs as I come from a very musical family. I found that after my stroke I was able to sing old songs that I'd learned as a child more easily than I found speaking."

"I'm very excited about singing with such a beautiful voice as Hayley's, and I'm not nervous. For me, singing with my friends in the choir is always exciting and we will all have done lots of practice for the concert."

As well as singing with the choir, Daniella has become a regular vo-

lunteer with the Life After Stroke Services network. The group helps people who have had a stroke come to terms with their experience, and lets them know what help is out there.

Daniella said: "Volunteering was for me the next step."

"I am involved with a really great group where I have made lots of friends and I understand the frustration they sometimes suffer."

"But you have to keep going and stay positive."

For more information on Hughes Syndrome, visit www.hughes-syndrome.org or call 020 7188 8217.

Every year, an estimated 150,000 people in the UK have a stroke.

The Stroke Association is a UK charity that aims to combat the effect in people of all ages. For more information, visit www.stroke.org.uk.



Client: The Stroke Association
Source: The Bath Chronicle (Main)
Date: 10 December 2009
Page: 7
Circulation: 18415
Size: 300cm2
Value: 516



BATTLING BACK: Stroke victim Daniella Gonzalez