

## Shelly's Story

When I was first diagnosed with the symptoms of Multiple Sclerosis I was twenty-five and working in the business world. I thought I was invincible, and when I began to go blind in my right eye, I just assumed I had abused my contacts. I was caught up in being a busy professional, traveling everywhere, meeting sales quotas. I had no time for being sick, let alone going blind!



Eventually I started to see doctors. I was passed around to several professionals and was ultimately diagnosed with MS. One of my doctors told me I had to slow down my life and learn to “be”. As a stiletto wearing, go-getter sales woman, I didn’t know what that meant. It took a move to Wisconsin, multiple relapses, and many life style changes to finally discover what it means to “be”.

Being is many things. Being authentic. Being honest. Being a part of a community. Through my “being”, I always fall back on a lesson my parents taught my brother and I. I grew up as an army brat, I’ve had the opportunity to live in many amazing places. No matter where we lived, my parents would always try to impact the community in a positive way. The goal being, when we moved away, we wanted to leave the place better than when we arrived. This is the goal of The Bluebird Restoration Project.



The beginning of the Bluebird Restoration Project was a simple way for the Girls Scouts and Boy Scouts to get together and build something. After we started the Bluebird Trail, I was contacted by neighbors and golfers at Hickory Hills, asking what

I was doing and how they could help. The women’s jogging group told me about all the bluebirds they were seeing and asked if they could buy nest boxes. People would pull over on the highway to tell us they had heard about our project and they loved what it had done for birds in the area!

I began to realize this project was bigger than me. This was about the community coming together to bring bluebirds back into the area and connecting our children with nature. The Bluebird Restoration Project quickly grew from a simple project into a true community experience.

