

# MEET EMMY

*For STEPtember 2023, we asked our coaches from last year if they want to embark on the same adventure with us again. They all answered yes. We asked them a few questions about how the past year went. Thanks to Emmy for taking the time to respond.*

## How was your year?

The years go by faster and faster! In October 2022, I had the opportunity to spend a week in a rehabilitation center and learn how cerebral palsy has been affecting my body. My case is very different from a typical case because I was diagnosed very late, around 35 years old (and even now it's a tricky issue), so I hadn't seen any specialists until then. It was an important week at the rehabilitation center; for the first time in my life, I felt seen. I was able to make connections between what I knew about my limits and the reasons behind them.

## What impact has STEPtember had on you?

Taking part in STEPtember was very beneficial for me. It enabled me to come to terms with my disability, to learn more about myself, and to affirm my desire to keep pushing back against the barriers to my abilities. It also opened the door for those around me to ask questions—and for many of them to learn what cerebral palsy is.

## Did you achieve your personal or professional goals this year? If not, how did you bounce back?

Last year, I had finally started to make progress in running, after stopping for several years when I became a mom in 2015. Unfortunately, persistent ankle pain put on the breaks, and, in January 2023, I was diagnosed with osteoarthritis, a likely consequence of my cerebral palsy and the extraordinary wear and tear on my joints. I went through treatment, but, as I never seem to take the easy route, the secondary effects of the treatment left me on crutches for a month. But since April, I've been running again. I hope I'll be able to sign up for a fitness challenge soon.

## How has cerebral palsy affected this last year?

The osteoarthritis diagnosis wasn't unexpected, but it was still a shock. Until now, I had never really had any of the so-called "painful" problems related to cerebral palsy. But I feel like the problems are now multiplying and that it's more difficult to recover. I'm more tired than ever, even though both of my children are at school now. I'm going to physical therapy every week, because I'm convinced that if you want to age as well as possible, you have to keep moving and maintain your joints.



Thank you Meagan Mason for the translation.