

Deberah Patterson

My name is Deberah Patterson. My husband, Patrick, and I live with our three children (Brandon, Ashley and Caitlyn) in Houston, Texas. I have been in the legal field for about 20 years. I began my career at ExxonMobil in 1990, moved on to several different law firms and currently work in the legal department at Pride International, Inc. I volunteer in the children's ministry at my church on Wednesday nights and Sunday mornings.

When our youngest daughter, Caitlyn, was 15 months old, we noticed she wasn't developing typically. During the following three months, as we carefully and prayerfully watched, Caitlyn showed no improvement. At 18 months, on her pediatrician's recommendation, we decided it was time to have her tested. In September 2006, when she was 20 months old, we received the diagnosis of Rett Syndrome (R168X). Naturally, we were devastated by the news, and we knew that it would change our family's lives completely.

Without a doubt, coping with Rett has been an emotional battle and a constant adjustment. However, through this hardship, we also have experienced many blessings. We have met and developed friendships with other families going through the same struggles that we would not otherwise have met. Just one week after Caitlyn's diagnosis, we attended our first fundraiser for Rett -- Kevin Black's annual golf tournament -- and we came away with a desire to work with other families to raise awareness and funds for Rett. Since then, we have volunteered each year at Kevin's golf tournament, and this past year (2009), I served on the committee to help organize Houston's first Rett Strollathon. I am excited to be a new member of the FAB and look forward to working with other board members and IRSF to provide information on support and services to families on their Rett journey.