

September 1, 2003

I would like to take this opportunity to let you know what Compassion In Action – USA has done for me.

My name is Patti and I was born with Spinal Bifida. I have had numerous surgeries since the age of 12, the last in May of 2001. In March of 2002 my physical condition worsened and I have not been able to work since that date.

I applied for Social Security Disability in June of 2002 and my claim was denied in February of 2003. I contacted Compassion In Action – USA in March and an appeal was filed on April 21, 2003. An Advocate from Compassion actually went with me to file the appeal. This same Advocate also accompanied me to my doctor's appointment on June 17<sup>th</sup> and spoke with him regarding the denial and requested that he write a letter to counter the denial.

This letter was received on August 22<sup>nd</sup> and an expedited appeal for a decision was filed on August 25<sup>th</sup> through my U.S. Congressman. I have just received the decision from the Appeals Judge and I have been approved for disability benefits back to March of 2002.

I cannot tell you what a relief this is and how quickly this decision was made after I started working with Compassion In Action – USA. It only took 4 days once I had the letter from my doctor. I did not know how to appeal the denial and would never have been able to do this on my own. Having an Advocate that fought this appeal for me allowed me to be relieved of the stress that was actually worsening my condition. The battle I went through to get the benefits I had worked for and was eligible for took 17 months. This decision could have been made in less than 3 months from the date I originally filed if my case had been reviewed carefully. The final decision was based on information already in my file. It took the persistence of Compassion In Action –USA to get the attention of the Judge with another letter from my doctor and my Congressman. It should never have taken this long. Again, this would never have happened if I hadn't gotten an Advocate from Compassion In Action –USA.

Sincerely,

Patti