

# Giving a Hand to Our Helping Hands!

## AFTD Volunteer: David Driggers

Information technology employs the quiet masterminds of businesses and organizations, although they often go unnoticed. These highly skilled professionals are invaluable to their organizations since they bring numerous, highly specialized skills and knowledge to the table.

David Driggers began volunteering with the AFTD in July 2014 and has been able to successfully combine his passion and expertise. David is contributing to AFTD's mission with his skills and drive for searching for hard to find medical information, using his technology experience in the fields of health and science. Years ago, David was diagnosed with a rare disease called Spasmodic Dysphonia, a neurological voice disorder. He turned this diagnosis into his livelihood by starting a medical information retrieval business, in which he would help his clients by customizing in-depth research reports for their medical conditions. He specialized in rare diseases and chronic disorders.



**David Driggers and his mother, Jean**

David currently works with AFTD's Scientific Director, Nadine Tatton, to track the results of the AFTD funded Pilot Grants that date back to 2005. His work is so complex, it's best explained in his own words, "I have been capturing awardee outcomes such as the number of FTD focused publications that came as a result of AFTD's direct funding, follow-on funding from the NIH [National Institutes of Health] or other agencies, grant data presented at meetings, FTD consortia collaborations, and patent applications." David uses databases such as PubMed, ClinicalTrials.gov and the NIH RePORTER to collect information that will be entered into AFTD's customer relationship management database.

David's mother lost her battle with FTD in 2010. "We laughed and cried throughout the crazy and unpredictable behaviors the disease brought," David says. "We were blessed that she retained her loving nature throughout the course of the disease and recognized family until her passing." David's mother donated her brain for research to the Mayo Clinic (Jacksonville, FL), revealing that a strong belief in the power of research definitely runs in the family.

By lending his expertise to the AFTD's need for specialized data mining, David has been a tremendous asset to the AFTD's mission. Everyone brings unique talents as volunteers, and the opportunities are limitless.

*Written by: Kathy Urban, volunteer writer for AFTD*