



## **Geri Jewell**

Actress, comedienne, author, motivational speaker and movement disorder and cerebral palsy advocate Geri Jewell, was born in 1968 with cerebral palsy. She was the first person to appear on a primetime sitcom with a disability, bringing significant awareness to cerebral palsy and its associated symptoms, such as muscle spasticity. Ms. Jewell became a Hollywood celebrity after her recurring role as Cousin Geri on the 80s hit sitcom "The Facts of Life." She currently appears on the HBO series "Deadwood," on the ABC soap opera "The Young and the Restless" and regularly travels the comedy circuit.

Ms. Jewell has worked with the United Cerebral Palsy Foundation for more than 25 years to promote awareness about cerebral palsy and its associated symptoms. Additionally, she participates in many motivational public speaking engagements on topics such as "Celebrating Abilities" and "Valuing Diversity."

With a diagnosis of athetoid cerebral palsy and ataxia, Ms. Jewell has experienced spasticity in her arms and legs, but more severely in her neck. The involuntary movements and muscle spasms have caused much pain and postural imbalance that has contributed to numerous falls over the years. In 1999, she experienced a serious fall that fractured her spine in four places. After surgery, and two years of rehabilitation, much of the imbalance Ms. Jewell experienced throughout her life was corrected. Now, she does not rely on anything to aid her walking. Ms. Jewell's current treatments for spasticity include botulinum toxin injection therapy, and massage therapy to manage the pain caused by the spasticity associated with her cerebral palsy.

While the performances, speaking engagements, and career obligations can increase the stress, both mentally and physically, Ms. Jewell does not let her disorder keep her from doing the things she loves. Her boundless energy, humoristic outlook on life and positive attitude has kept her rejuvenated in mind and spirit.