

# SUFFERING THE SILENCE: 2018

Suffering the Silence (STS) is a 501(c)3 organization dedicated to leveraging the power of art, media, and storytelling to raise awareness and break the stigma surrounding the living experience of chronic illnesses and disability. Here's a quick overview of our impact in 2018.



[#MarchingWithMe](#) continued to grow in 2018. We paired [more than 400 new supporters](#) with able-bodied marchers, expanding from our original group of 700+ participants in 2017. We also partnered with the organizers of the NYC Women's March to facilitate a disability section - a safe space for people with disabilities to participate in the event - filling more than two city blocks. Additionally, we offered representation to folks at other marches and events around the world, ranging as far as Jakarta!

We partnered with Zeno Mountain Farm to host our second-annual [Spoonie Collective](#), an all-inclusive retreat for the chronic illness community focused on breaking down feelings of isolation and creating a safe space to discuss our shared experiences. This year, we brought together 23 people with varying diagnoses hailing from six states for a FREE four-day retreat in Lincoln, Vermont. We were successfully able to accommodate all dietary restrictions and other needs. The culminating storytelling night of the program was attended by 100+ people and brought the voices of participants to the public, [breaking the stigmas](#) so often felt by this community.



We further expanded our storytelling efforts after the retreat by hosting storytelling nights featuring 20+ members of the chronic illness community to packed houses in [New York](#) and [Chicago](#). These storytelling nights were live streamed and experienced by more than [10,000 viewers around the world](#). Participation in these events was not only formative for the storytellers, but also helped reshape the public perspective of what it is like to live with a chronic condition/invisible disability.

We exhibited our documentary photography series, [Illness & Identity](#), at the [Grand Opera House](#) in Delaware, hosted a discussion on healthy patient/physician relationships in Boston, and facilitated workshops at the [30 Under 30 Changemakers Conference](#) and for first year medical students at [Weill Cornell Medical College](#) in NYC. *Stay tuned for more Illness & Identity stories: coming soon!*



This year, we started production on a new documentary film series, [Trust Me I'm Sick](#), created in partnership with Arlo Pictures. This series hopes to [challenge perceptions and implications](#) of what it feels and looks like to live with a chronic condition through the unique stories of five individuals. Targeting a [2019 release](#), this will be one of our biggest projects to date.

Our viral social media posts reached more than [15 million people](#) and garnered more than [10 million engagements](#) this year. Our Facebook audience grew to more than [16,000](#) and our community on Instagram passed 6,000. Overall, we engaged more people in the STS community than ever before .



Thank you for your continued support!

*Ally Costello* *Erin Lupinacci* *Ash*