

A Type 1 Diabetic, Just An Ordinary Face in The Crowd

After having been contacted by the mother of a little girl with Type 1 Diabetes, I began preparing an article about the fundraising efforts of young Kaylee Eury and her Kid Walk for a Cure. Kaylee, along with the students and teachers of Ansonville Elementary, as well as many parents, participated in the event which raised over \$1,600, all donated to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF).

I understood about their one-mile walk within the walls of the gymnasium and how Kaylee wanted to do this to help all the children suffering with Diabetes. Her parents, Candie and Vernon Eury, said, "Kaylee felt really good about what happened at her school and what they had done to help others who are suffering." The Eury's wanted to be sure I spoke openly about Type 1 Diabetes and the symptoms you should be aware of, and Kaylee wanted you to know that she is just like every other child, with one difference, she has Type 1 Diabetes.

As I searched for more information from the JDRF, the largest organization actively seeking a cure, better treatments, and ultimate prevention, what I found was not that different than what I already knew about the disease. With Type 1 Diabetes the body stops producing insulin, a hormone that enables the body to use glucose found in foods for energy. Children with Type 1 Diabetes must take daily insulin injections to survive. And that's the part I was aware of, but honestly, I hadn't really given it further thought. Yes, I had heard of Type 1 Diabetes and knew of the problems with insulin and even the injections needed for survival. I have had encounters with children who are affected with the disease, but I am sorry to say I didn't fully understand what it meant. As a teacher I was proactive in that I knew where the parents of affected children were during class time and I had juice on hand in case of emergencies. But that's as far as my knowledge allowed. It wasn't until I began asking questions and listening to the shared stories of how these children were first diagnosed, the agony they and their family faced, and how it changed their lives that I considered this disease heart stopping, forever affecting me and my thoughts about Juveniles.

As a teacher I thought I knew what I needed to know about the disease, but I was wrong. And rather than just read about it, I decided to use this wealth of resources to learn more. "Tell me the story of how you found out about the disease which now plagues your lives. How has it affected not only your child but your entire family?" I would begin with my students' parents. And the stories just flowed...all similar, all devastatingly painful, all heart stopping.

"Our son Drake was diagnosed at 14 months and he has just celebrated his 11th birthday," said Ginger Phillips. It was September 15, and Drake walked around home while drinking from a juice cup. As soon as he finished he would ask for more. "My husband Ryan and I thought he had a sore throat so we took him to the doctor," Ginger continued. "But almost immediately the nurse said, 'I think it's Diabetes.' At that point Drake's blood sugar level was 586, with normal being between 80-120. And he spent the next five days in the hospital." During those five days there was much to be done and much to learn in addition to the treatment Drake received. His parents had to learn how to give insulin injections to their small son, they had to learn how to calculate carbohydrates in everything he ate or drank, and how to best determine the range he needed to be in for good health. "We were basically alone and didn't know a lot about the disease nor any others who were facing what we were," continued Ginger. "There were support groups in Charlotte, but living in Morven made that difficult," she admitted.

A simple outing turned into packing coolers with insulin and foods needed for their diabetic child and ways to test and check his blood sugar levels every two to three hours. That includes the hours a parent is usually asleep, and as Ginger said, "We had to test even when he was asleep to insure his levels were as normal as possible. Now we can test him with a finger prick and he doesn't even feel it. That's because he's been tested approximately 8-10 times per day so his fingertips are numb."

"I am so grateful to have met Shelly Lowery to have met Shelly Lowery and her daughter Maleyiah," said Ginger. Maleyiah is a 7-year-old student. Maleyiah has Type 1 Diabetes and was diagnosed at age 4. Shelly Lowery shares this, "Maleyiah was at home eating her cousin's birthday cake on July 15, when my husband Mike and I noticed that she became sick. We thought because of the July heat that she was extremely thirsty. But she showed signs of a possible virus so we took her to the doctor. Almost immediately they said the word 'Diabetes' and sent her to the hospital for testing. Maleyiah's blood sugar level was at 840 and she went into Diabetic Ketoacidosis. She was transported to CMC Main where she stayed for nearly one week in the ICU."

And just like the Phillips family, Maleyiah's parents had to learn how to inject their small child with insulin, measure her blood sugar and calculate carbohydrates. Because without doing these things, Maleyiah would be in serious trouble. The Lowery's, too, became proactive in their quest to find optimal health for their little girl suffering with the disease. "Maleyiah was so weak I had to hold her up, carry her around. She was extremely thirsty and showed signs of a terrible virus. Everyone needs to know the signs for Diabetes and I don't mind speaking out because they need to be known. There is a rise in the number of cases now and we all need to become more aware," said Shelly Lowery. "At first we were in denial and thought she had a virus and was dehydrated, but we were wrong. People are somewhat ignorant about this disease," she added, and I must agree with Shelly, I was one of those somewhat ignorant people. There are stigmas attached as these children are asked, "Why do you wear that (pump), why do you have to see the school nurse so often and can I catch your disease?" It is upsetting for a child to hear these questions and Maleyiah, Kaylee and Drake all realize at an early age that people just don't fully understand their circumstances.

Candy Allen has been desperately trying to raise money needed for a Diabetic dog to help in the treatment of her young son, Remington,

who was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes just prior to his first birthday in 2010. Little Remi, too, had symptoms much like that of a virus and was taken to the doctor. Ultimately Remington's blood sugar level was 989, and he was admitted to the Intensive Care Unit in Chapel Hill Hospital where he remained for a week. Remi had possible brain damage his doctor's said, which worsened the situation. This now familiar story is filled with the teachings of giving young babies insulin shots, counting carbs and how to determine glucose levels. But in Remington's case the levels were constantly up and down, and he spent much of his life in and out of the hospital. Now that he is using the insulin pump he is doing better but still has many highs and lows.

Because he is so young Remi can easily run and hide in order to eat something he wants because it is much like playing a game to a three year old. A diabetic alert dog, trained in this field, would help in keeping his insulin levels regulated, in the number of times he passes out and in keeping him from going into a coma by closely monitoring his whereabouts and his consumption of food. The dog would cost approximately \$19,000 and Remington's family has raised \$7,000 towards actually obtaining one. Time is running out though, with only two more years left to receive the dog they could still use your help. If you can help with a contribution, please give it at www.guardianangelservicedogs.org where it must have the name 'Remington Allen' in the memo line.

Remington is the youngest in this story and his parents are still struggling to find a way to keep his levels maintained. They believe the guardian service dog would be one answer in improving Remi's quality of life. And isn't that what every good parent wants for their child, no matter the circumstances?

In this article you have met Kaylee, Drake, Maleyiah and Remington. They are only four faces in the crowd of Type 1 Diabetic sufferers. Their stories are basically the same, only different in the ages they were diagnosed and their ability or inability to explain what is going on in their young lives. For the record, Drake would like for you to know that he plans to become a professional motocross racer and there is absolutely no reason why he shouldn't. He says, "I am no different than everyone else. I should have to be more careful."

Drake's mom, Ginger would like to say that Diabetes is not contagious and other kids cannot just catch the disease. Of course they are very cautious and do try and shelter their son, but Drake insists on being "a normal kid." His sister, Kamryn is both concerned for her big brother and a bit jealous of the fact that he gets smoothies whenever he needs them. Drake, on the other hand, will be the first to tell his little sister to go ahead and have one of those smoothies, even when he can't do the same. Kamryn continues to learn about the disease her brother faces along with the rest of us. "It does take a lot of time away from my life and it is aggravating to have to deal with," admits Drake. He and his family continue to live as normal a life as possible as they remain a very proactive family unit. Drake and Kamryn are very close siblings.

Maleyiah would like you to know that she has good days and bad. That she is no different than any other child her age and that she is still just Maleyiah, not the little girl with Diabetes. She would also stress that Diabetes is not contagious and that she can do anything she wants to do and live a successful life. Maleyiah just finished her second year in baton and won the "Star Achiever Award" for only having missed one class, which was during the time she spent in the hospital. Her mom Shelly would like to stress the importance of getting involved and learning more about Juvenile Diabetes, supporting the cause and researching the cure. Maleyiah's sisters are constantly monitoring her and watch closely her every move. "We have to be sure she isn't sneaking something to eat and we have to be able to calculate her carbs. We are very protective and are quick to react when someone is picking on her or someone else who suffers with diabetes. We are scared she may get sick at any given time and that we may not do something correctly," they continued. All are currently learning and teaching themselves how to care for Maleyiah, which is an ongoing process. Maleyiah and her

family are very close and look out for her best interests. Maleyiah remains active at school and for her extracurricular activities and is excelling and flourishing.

Know the signs and symptoms! Some of the warnings include extreme thirst, frequent urination, weight loss, increased hunger, vision, irritability, tingling or numbness in the hands or feet, frequent skin, bladder or gum infections, wounds that don't heal and extreme, unexplained fatigue.

These children have the faces of any other child in a crowd. They look no different than your child or mine. But do not be fooled. They are the faces of Type 1 Diabetes, a disease that is on the rise, a disease we all need to be more vigilant in detecting, and a disease affecting children who are too young to express how badly they feel. Let's become more proactive by educating ourselves. Visit www.JDRF.org for more information, or simply ask questions. These families want to talk about it and want you to better understand in order that their children truly can live better normal lives. Experience is the best teacher, let's be good students and learn as much as we can from theirs.

By Melanie Lyon

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Initial Sermon of Marie C. Bennett

Marie C. Bennett has been a part of the BCC Church Family since March 2004. After serving as a member of the praise team, the Lord led her to start the BCC Dance Ministry, which we now know as the New Wine Prophetic Dance Ministry. She was ordained as a deaconess in our leadership in January 2007, and she also began her role as Church Secretary. Deaconess Bennett is the mother of six children and three grandchildren.

We here at BCC have always known that there was something very special about Deaconess Bennett, and on April 22, 2012, she accepted the call to the Lord into the Gospel Ministry. Deaconess Bennett is a very dedicated and committed church leader, and she takes on her responsibility in the Kingdom of God with a passion.

Deaconess Bennett will be doing her initial sermon on Sunday, July 22, 2012, at 4 p.m. at BCC Church, located at 925 South Main Street in Wadesboro, North Carolina. You all are invited to come out and help us celebrate this historical day with such a Great Woman and God. We are glad to have her here at BCC as a loving daughter and a fellow soldier in the Kingdom of God.



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