

Dear Friends and Family,

As I sit down to write on behalf of my daughter, Makenzie, I am challenged to share with you some ways that diabetes affects our lives. So often, I am asked how Makenzie is doing, or if it will get easier for her when she gets older. Each time, I find myself saying similar things. Makenzie has high blood sugar and low blood sugar, and the control of diabetes is basically a balancing act between the highs and the lows. This will continue to be the case for her, as she gets older unless there is a cure for the disease. Both the highs and lows affect her differently. The lows cause her to be shaky, disoriented and cranky. Occasionally, the lows can cause her to have seizures. The highs cause her to be cranky, feel badly, and make it difficult for her to concentrate. Ultimately, the highs can cause her to have long term problems with her internal organs. Despite it all, Makenzie does great as long as we keep her high and low blood sugars in balance. The challenge is that the treatment of the disease relies on many factors such as stress, growth, activity level, and foods, just to name a few. Sometimes she can eat the same food that she always eats, and her body reacts differently. That is just the nature of the beast.

In thinking of highs and lows, we would love to share with you some of the highs and lows regarding how diabetes affects Makenzie as a person. We are so fortunate that although diabetes is a challenge for Makenzie, it does not stop her from doing anything. She is active in dance, summer swim team, soccer, and church activities. We are blessed in that she spends the night with friends and their parents are willing to do what needs to be done to keep her safe. She has been able to attend Camp Kudzu (a camp for children with diabetes) for the past two years. This has been an amazing experience for her and she comes back even more independent after each visit. This year she learned to change out her own pump site (this involves inserting a 2 inch needle into her stomach). She has not done this at home on herself but she did show me how to do it on her stuffed animal. One of the biggest highs for Makenzie is all the support that she receives from you each year as donators toward a cure, walkers on our walk team, and as prayer warriors. She is so excited each year when she opens the mailbox and there is a donation toward a cure. We also know that the absolute greatest high will come when there is a cure for this disease. I am certain that we will see this in Makenzie's lifetime and am so excited that we all can be a proactive part in making that happen.

Until then, let me tell you a little about the lows that Makenzie experiences regarding diabetes. For the past couple of years, there are times when Makenzie will get down and say "I hate diabetes" or "diabetes stinks." Over the spring and summer, we struggled with getting Makenzie's levels to come down. She is growing and the amount of insulin that she needs is greater than ever before. We saw huge behavior and focusing differences in Makenzie with the high blood sugars. She felt bad and was generally unhappy. This is not like her at all, as she typically giggles and has a huge smile on her face. She was so used to how she felt that she did not even realize that her levels were continually high. I, being the special education teacher, put her on all kinds of positive behavior management plans and checklists. I looked at her moods swings as a behavior problem and did not realize that they were diabetes related. Now that her levels are under better control, I feel like I have my little girl back again. It is really amazing how much the high and low blood sugars affect every part of her life. It is also amazing how the non-diseased body takes care of these things without us even thinking about it. We truly are fearfully and wonderfully made.

We thank all of you for again reading our letter. We know that this is one of many that some of you have received. We are so fortunate to have such good friends and we hope and pray that we can count on you to continue to support Makenzie via JDRF so that she will see that cure in her lifetime. Here are some ways that you can help our cause for a cure:

1. Collect donations and walk with us on October 20 at Centennial Park
2. Send a donation to help fund the researchers so that they can find a cure.
3. Pray that God will give the researchers the knowledge and wisdom needed to defeat this disease.
4. Pray for Makenzie that she will feel well and that she will not suffer from serious long-term effects of the disease such as kidney failure, blindness, and heart disease.

If you are interested in walking with us or donating, or if you are interested in finding out more about diabetes, please check out Makenzie's website at: www.milesformakenzie.com

Thank you for all of your support and prayers.

Love,

David, Kelle, Morgan, Makenzie and Davis Laushey