



UNTIL A CURE IS FOUND THE POWER OF DANCE

BY ELIZABETH FORREST

As an incredibly shy kid, dance brought me out of my shell and fueled my passion when being diagnosed with type 1 diabetes turned my life upside down. I was attending a performing arts public school, and my dance class put on a performance, which inspired me to start my own show, Dancing for Diabetes. Our annual November showcase is in its 19th year, bringing joy to the audience and funding research toward a cure for type 1 diabetes. It was a positive twist on a bad situation; a theme I've applied to all I've done ever since.

We all have challenges and barriers to face - what we do to overcome those is entirely up to us. Frequently, our response to these circumstances is the only thing we can control. Many people feel alone or overwhelmed, as if they're the only ones going through a certain situation. They feel no one can truly understand what they're dealing with. It can be discouraging and isolating. The great surprise is that virtually any challenge, any physical or psychological obstacle, is being faced and has been successfully overcome by many others. Friends, family and support groups frequently make the difference in our ability to persevere.

I am beyond fortunate to have a team of motivating mentors in my life - the women that taught me about dance, teamwork, and provided structure in the midst of my challenges. Together, they proved the power of a support network's impact. Holley, Miriam, Valerie, Shannon, and Maureen are in our community changing lives every day, and I am so thankful our paths crossed when they did. Sometimes you only need to look around, ask someone who cares about you, even search for others online with a common cause, and the network of support will begin to build.

Because of the power of dance - allowing creative expression, providing a voice when words aren't available, strengthening our bodies - Dancing for Diabetes offers a free dance program for kids and teens with type 1 diabetes in Central Florida. The goal was to create a safe environment for these young people to develop long-lasting relationships with others going through the same challenges, who share a common interest in dance, while providing a creative and positive physical outlet. We've done this for the past seven years and have been inspired by all those in the program to keep it growing.

If you know any youth with type 1 diabetes, whether they have dance experience or not, please encourage them to register for our free dance program. Their common bonds can help them find the support they need. Classes start September 14th in Altamonte Springs. For more information, visit DancingforDiabetes.org.



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