



UNTIL A CURE IS FOUND

BY ELIZABETH FORREST

“You have type 1 diabetes,” is what I heard at ten years old, after having been home sick from school for a month. Twenty pounds underweight, I suffered from blurred vision, constant thirst and frequent urination - all signs originally mistaken for the stomach flu. Turns out that first diagnosis was way off.

After a few days at the hospital, I headed home just in time for Halloween, ‘Trick or Treating’ with the other kids. Because type 1 diabetes (T1D) was so new to us, I was happily surprised to find out I could pick out some of my favorites candies and save them – we learned that I could have them, just in moderation and with a precise insulin dosage calculation. One misconception with T1D is that sugar is the enemy. More times than I can count, sugar has saved my life over the last 20 years. Since I was diagnosed with T1D, food has become a form of medicine. Along with insulin, it stabilizes my blood sugar. Among other common misconceptions: Insulin is not a cure – it is merely a lifesaving medication used to manage and treat diabetes, and there is absolutely nothing I did to spark the onset and initial diagnosis of my T1D.

Quickly after I found out about my diabetes, I started to think about what I could do to help the cause, especially other kids like me. My family hosted a neighborhood block party at our house and invited all the neighbors. It was through that small event that I got the itch to do more. I was attending a fine arts magnet middle school in Sanford, and through my dance class, I thought about hosting a show that would raise awareness and funds at the same time. It seemed like an obvious idea to me. So, I approached my principal and dance teacher; both were enthusiastically on board! After our first official production at the school’s theater, an audience member wrote a review, calling the show “Dancing for Diabetes.” That began what has become my passion, and Dancing for Diabetes continued, year after year, showcasing dance groups, raising funds and expanding awareness of T1D.

Nineteen years later, “Dancing for Diabetes” has outgrown the original school auditorium, and will be held at the Bob Carr Theater on Saturday, November 9th. Through the years, though, the message remains the same: if you have T1D, you are not alone, there are people and resources to support you.

To learn more about what Dancing for Diabetes is doing in our community year-round, or to join our fundraising efforts, please visit dancingfordiabetes.org or email me at elizabeth@dancing4diabetes.com.



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