

Sophia goes to Washington



AUGUST 07, 2013 10:58 AM • [CAROLYN YOUNGER](#)

Six-year-old Sophia Honig went to Washington, D.C. last month and learned something unexpected about her congressman — Mike Thompson has a desk drawer in his office full of stuffed toys reserved for young visitors.

Sophia chose a little dog and carried it with her everywhere during the visit.

The Rutherford youngster is the daughter of Stephanie and Michael Honig. Diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes last year, she was in the nation's capital as part of the Juvenile Diabetes

Research Foundation's 2013 Children's Congress, 150 young delegates all with Type 1 diabetes, who travel to Washington every two years to meet face-to-face with top decision makers and urge them to continue funding Type 1 diabetes research.

During the three-day visit, the children's delegation, this year wearing distinctive sky-blue Children's Congress T-shirts, also met adults with diabetes — a chef, a race car driver and a sports announcer — Michael Honig said, but even more impressive was being with other children and young adults with insulin pumps who were dealing with the same daily regimen that having Type 1 diabetes requires.

"I think it was reassuring just knowing she wasn't alone," her father said. "She is very observant."

Although Sophia had hoped to have her photograph taken with President Obama, she soon added a new hero to her list — District 5 Rep. Thompson, D-St. Helena.

"He was so nice, so caring," Michael Honig said. "He knew the issues and he sat down with us, heard her story and looked through her photo journal with her."

Honig was impressed that the money the government gives for diabetes research is matched by the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation.

An estimated 25.8 million people in the U.S. are diagnosed with diabetes, 10 percent with Type 1.

"One thing about diabetes ... it's not a Democratic or Republican issue," Honig said. "Everyone had a story with a close connection ... I was impressed that people still matter to our officials. We don't always see that. I was gratified."

