

Ross student takes diabetes issue to Congress

By Derek Wilson Marinscope contributor | Posted: Wednesday, July 1, 2015 11:30 am

Perhaps no one likes getting a shot, but for 10-year-old Delilah Marrocco it has been part of her routine several times a time, every day since she was 6 years old.

The Ross School student was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes four years ago. Her family knew something was wrong as Delilah was “thirsty and hungry all the time.”

“I went online and the only thing I found that matched her symptoms was diabetes,” said Heather Marrocco, Delilah’s mother. “I didn’t understand the difference between Type 1 and Type 2. I didn’t know anyone who had it. We went to doctor and right away they said to go to the emergency room.”

Doctors at California Pacific Medical Center quickly ramped up her low blood sugar and taught her and her family how and when to use insulin injections, count carbohydrates and control Delilah’s blood sugar.

“It was very scary,” Delilah said. “It was a lot to learn.”

Delilah will join 160 other children from around the United States in Washington, D.C., to remind members of Congress of the need to find a cure for Type 1 diabetes.

Type 1 diabetes, formerly known as juvenile diabetes, is a chronic condition in which the body does not naturally produce enough insulin to convert sugars and starches into energy. According to the American Diabetes Association, only five percent of people with diabetes have Type 1.

These children — ages 4 to 17, and representing all 50 states and the District of Columbia — will visit the nation’s capital as delegates to JDRF 2015 Children’s Congress, to be held from July 13-15. Joining them will be six international delegates traveling from Australia, Canada, Denmark, Israel, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.



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The event, which is held every other summer, will include visits with members of Congress and a congressional committee hearing, during which selected delegates and Type 1 diabetes celebrity advocates will testify on the need for continued funding for further research.

Delilah made a scrapbook to show Congressman Jared Huffman and Senator Dianne Feinstein to remind them of the need to renew funding for research into Type 1 diabetes.

JDRF has invested nearly \$2 billion into research over the past 45 years and is sponsoring research projects in 17 countries.

Delilah is excited to go to Washington and see the sights, but she is equally focused on the task at hand.

“I am grateful for all of the things that help me manage my diabetes,” Delilah said. “I realize that government funding has made these devices possible through millions of dollars of research.”

Delilah receives regular injections at school from the nurse and staff are trained to help in an emergency.

Delilah checks her blood sugar when she gets up in the morning, then has breakfast and walks to school. Her mother carefully labels all the food in Delilah’s lunch with amount of carbs and whether it’s a snack or lunch.

“There’s nothing she can’t do just because of diabetes,” Heather Marrocco said. “It just takes a couple extra steps.”

Delilah said she is open to talking about diabetes and hopes people can learn from her experience.

“When people ask me questions about my pump or my (Continuous Glucose Monitor), I talk to them about Type 1 diabetes,” she said.

One of the most important aids in maintaining Delilah’s blood sugar levels is actually her yellow Labrador mix, Yalu, a diabetes alert dog. Yalu will stay by Delilah’s side and bark continually if she senses there is something wrong with Delilah.

“I really love her,” Delilah said. “She takes care of me. She and the whole family help me.”

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