



Dear Friends:

In February 2003, just one month shy of her fifth birthday, our daughter Sara, was diagnosed with Type I diabetes, a chronic and incurable disease which she will never outgrow. After a four-night hospital stay and one day of diabetes “training” at Children’s Hospital – we were sent home, and on our own to manage our new way of life.

Sara’s diagnosis not only changed her life, but it changed our entire family. Gone were the carefree days of walking out the door to run errands or even play at the local park. There were so many things to remember, do we have Sara’s checker? A snack in case she is low? Water? Insulin? Syringes? We hoped we remembered everything for what should be a simple trip.

Until you actually live with this disease, the way Sara does, it is very difficult to understand that this is a 24-hour job. The calculations of insulin. The injections. The monitoring of blood sugar. It is never ending. The urge to protect your child and at times you feel helpless when fighting this disease. Even if we tightly control Sara’s diet and blood sugar levels, over time, she still has a 50% greater risk for heart disease, kidney disease, and blindness and worst of all- the life expectancy for someone with diabetes is reduced by 15 years.

Over the past seven years we have tried several insulin delivery methods – which eventually led us to her current regimen of using an insulin pump. The pump “site” is inserted under the skin (with a 2” needle), and this must be changed every three days to ensure proper absorption of insulin. Sara continues to wear an insulin pump, and her quality of life has improved with this incredible device. But we have also experienced the downside of technology – when something is not working properly Sara’s blood sugars can spike up very quickly, which makes her sick even if caught in a short amount of time. And she must wear the pump at all times– even while sleeping. She also has to check her blood sugar more often – sometimes up to eight times a day. Diabetes NEVER sleeps and NEVER takes a vacation.

We try very hard to let Sara lead a normal life - she plays soccer, basketball and swims on our community swim team – however, it is very difficult for her to be "normal." Her blood sugar has to be monitored more closely during strenuous activities, such as soccer and swimming. We always watch for signs of low blood sugar, which can cause her to pass out and require emergency treatment.

A few years ago, Sara had to write a “deep thought” poem as a class assignment. This is her poem:

Shadow
By Sara Jacob

I've got a shadow.
And you've got one too.
But the kind that I have,
Is different from you.

My shadow is huge.
It's taken over my life.
My shadow is diabetes.
Larger than life.

Diabetes is a disease.
But there is no cure.
You can't catch diabetes.
That is for sure.

I've got a shadow.
And you've got one too.
But the kind that I have,
Is way different from you.

Every dollar raised by HOSA members is a step closer to our hope of finding a cure. It is difficult to remember what life was like before diabetes affected our family, but it is easy to imagine what life could be like without it.

Thank you for your support in raising money for better treatments and a cure. One day, with your help, our hope will become a reality.

There is a cure, and together we will find it.

Brian & Dawn Jacob