

DIABETES

Real People, Real Stories, Real Answers

Lifestyle

COVER STORY

My Son, My Inspiration!

LIVING WITH DIABETES

- Lifestyle Choices
- Pregnancy -
The Final Months
- I am Pumped!
- For Whom the
Emotional Bell Tolls
- Still pursuing my
dreams...
- 'Barefoot' Running
Shoes

Mustard Greens – a
Favourite African
Spring Dish

Magic? You are the
Magic!

How lucky are you?



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Diabetes Lifestyle...

Real People, Real Stories, Real Answers

EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to our final issue for 2012. Our loyal subscribers* and readers will notice that this is Issue 3 and not Issue 4 for 2012 - our planned Third Quarter Issue was withheld for a number of reasons, including a change of our Publisher and design and layout specialist. In that vein, we welcome Angela Bell and Adèle Gouws to the **Diabetes Lifestyle** team!

We took the opportunity in the changeover to rework the look and feel of our offering. The quality and depth of the content remains the same, but we trust that the design changes will make **Diabetes Lifestyle** an easier and more compelling read. We would welcome your feedback on our new look as well as any suggestions you may have to improve our 2013 Issues still further.

We have had a tough time deciding what to include in this issue as we have much content 'waiting in the wings'. As usual, we have a spread of thought-provoking and inspiring stories that should provide something for everyone. Our team at **Diabetes Lifestyle** is continually uplifted and challenged by the purposeful and passionate lives that we feature. We salute and thank our contributors for lighting the way for others by your examples.

The New Year is on our doorstep. We only have one life – let's spend a moment at the beginning of the New Year to take stock of where we are and where we would like to be. What changes do we need to make to improve our lives and to achieve our goals? Are we willing to make those changes? Are we willing to assume responsibility for our choices? May you experience rest with family and friends over the Festive Season and may 2013 bring blessings of love, health and a life lived with integrity and purpose.

Yours in diabetes care

Michael Brown

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* Dear Subscribers – rest assured that you have paid for four Issues and that is still what you will get...



Cover story photos by Michael Brown

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COVER STORY

My Son, My Inspiration!

Charmaine Meyer

When my son Duncan was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes at the age of 5 years, I felt as if the whole world came crashing down on me...

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By Charmaine Meyer

When my son Duncan was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes at the age of 5 years, I felt as if the whole world came crashing down on me. It felt as if life had ended. I didn't know what type 1 diabetes was, nor did I know what insulin was! What I did know was that when your child gets sick, you give medicine or antibiotics and they get better. This time, I couldn't make the bad bug go away! It was there to stay no matter what!

It did get better each day. With the insulin shots, my son started to look so much better, and he had energy again. Each time I had to give him his insulin, I felt as if a knife stabbed me in the heart. Many times, I sobbed after giving an injection. I battled to answer his innocent questions and it ripped my heart to



**my son,
my Inspiration!**

pieces when he cried that he didn't want injections as they were "eina!" Yet he coped very well and was so proud of himself when he started doing his own injections with the pen! Now he can manage an insulin pump on his own as well and he's only 8 years old!

I, on the other hand, just could not accept that I was unable to take it away! I battled to cope and ended up pushing my loved ones away from me, I turned into this shouting and screaming monster of a mom. I felt sorry for my 2-year-old daughter who just didn't understand what was going on with her brother or why mommy was always crying and shouting. I literally cut myself off from all friends and family. I became very depressed and the doctor put me onto anti-depressants. This helped me to cope better and gradually I could see things differently, more positively. I only accepted my son's diabetes a year after his diagnosis! What a lonely year that was! I decided that I should not be alone in this battle; I needed friends who could support me.

When I started searching for support groups, I could only find these extremely depressing pages on the internet and negative thinking groups! We have enough to deal with - no need to join some pity party group, thank you very much!

A friend suggested that I should start my own support group and I liked the idea! Facebook is a social network used by so many and it's the ideal place to start a group. So, although I was a beginner on Facebook, I started a group called Kids Powered by Insulin. The name came easily; we used to tell Duncan that he is a little superhero that needed insulin to give him the power to help him run, think and play. Now 2 years after starting the group, we have just over 200 members! It is sad each time we get a new member, because this means that another child has type 1 diabetes, but I am also happy that the parent of this child will not have to do it alone!



What keeps me positive about being a mom to 8 year old Duncan are these wonderful mothers in our Group! To know that I am NOT alone! I also remind myself that some children suffer from far worse! Our kids might have a chronic condition, but they can still run, and play, and laugh and grow up and eventually have kids of their own!

As a Group, we believe in Positive Parenting of our children with diabetes and strive to bring up Positive Kids! But, we are only human and do have our 'off' days. On these days, the moms on our Group are there to pick us up!

We laugh and cry together, scream and vent, but most of all we are **there** for each other!

My motto is, 'You can't fight a war you that cannot win'. Rather make friends with your enemy and live in harmony! It makes sense, hey? Why fight it? There is no cure for type 1 diabetes (yet)! Remember, our kids were here first, then came the diabetes, so yes, diabetes must fit into our children's lives and not the other way around.

I don't know what I would do without this amazing Group. I have made so many friends! We share endless advice, recipes, ideas and so much more! Those late night chats on the BBM groups when we are having a bad time reminds me again how much we stick together!

Think back to the day your child was diagnosed. Your child was so sick! How grateful we were for insulin. Our children got the right diagnosis and there was insulin to help. How different things would have been without insulin. I believe we should celebrate the day our children were diagnosed each year, and give thanks for the insulin that saved his or her life and gave us a second chance. It is a celebration of life!

We do get those days when we need a friend to talk to, to scream out your frustrations, to cry! Unfortunately, we are only human! But, our kids are also little human-beings; they also get their 'off' days! We are all allowed to throw a tantrum, scream and shout, even if it's within a Facebook support group! It's great how my friends in the Group always just have the right words to say to make me feel better and special.

I know now that my son's diabetes was not caused by anything I did wrong. I have accepted the 'enemy' and we are trying hard to live in harmony with diabetes... but we still get to bump heads... often! However, I remain the Mother and I will never allow this enemy/friend to control my son or my family, WE make the rules, WE get to control it.

Our kids are superheroes powered by insulin! As parents, we are super dads and super moms - super parents! And, as parents, we are here for each other, we don't give up hope and we ARE family!

My son's name, Duncan, is of Scottish origin, and means 'Warrior'. How true this meaning is! He is our little warrior who does not allow diabetes to deprive him of anything! He was top student in his class in Grade 1 and now in Grade 2, he continues to do extremely well. He does public speaking, excels in the Eisteddfods, and brings in one diploma after the other. He wants to become a professional golf player one day.

My dear boy, I am so proud of all your achievements. You are truly destined for great things in life! You are my inspiration, my whole world, and I love you for the wonderful boy you are. Thank you for teaching me the lessons of acceptance and gratefulness! You are my HERO, my WARRIOR!

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* The clinical significance of bias depends on the patient and their clinical condition and must be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

