



Evan, Peri, & Tyler Kramer Michigan



“Since I was diagnosed with diabetes, I’ve learned that if something bad or unexpected happens to you, you could either feel sorry for yourself, and do nothing, or you can get moving and try to make a difference,” says Tyler – a sentiment echoed by the entire family and the reason they became involved in the *In Whose Two Shoes* program created by the Patient Mentor Institute for children and families with Type 1 diabetes.

When Tyler’s dad, Evan, first learned that Tyler had been diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes, he felt responsible. Diabetes ran in his family; his own brother and sister had it. “I grew up seeing how diabetes had ruled my siblings’ lives,” he recalls. “I couldn’t let Tyler live that way.”

So from the beginning, Evan and his wife, Peri, made the decision to be diabetes advocates and educators, beginning with their son. “We had to instill a positive attitude in Tyler so he knew diabetes should not stop him from reaching his dreams,” says Peri.

Tyler, meanwhile, wasn’t quite sure what to think when he received his diagnosis in 2005 at age 10. “At first, I thought getting diabetes was a punishment for something I did wrong,” he says. “But then I realized that it wasn’t, because I didn’t do anything wrong, so I try to make the best of my situation.”

Tyler reports that diabetes has not changed his life dramatically. “I still have the same friends, family and school,” he points out. What did change was his daily routine – which now includes frequent blood sugar testing, healthy eating and plenty of exercise. “The exercise is probably the easiest part,” says Tyler, who was captain of his soccer team, a diver and an avid snowboarder.

Still, living with diabetes has its challenges, Tyler admits. While the frequent insulin shots he once received have been replaced by a more convenient insulin pump, he still must check his blood sugar frequently and keep any supplies he might need handy. As he’s grown older, he has taken more responsibility for his own care.

“Even though it’s a huge challenge, I’m still able to do what I want and not miss out on anything that a kid my age likes to do. In addition to sports, that also includes going to camp and raising money for diabetes research. Tyler, for example, has served as a Youth Ambassador for the American Diabetes Association’s Tour de Cure, participating in media interviews and a public service announcement, while also helping raise tens of thousands of dollars.

Both of his parents are proud of his many accomplishments. “We try very hard to allow him to be a regular kid,” says Peri. “We find ways to say “yes” instead of “no.”

Suggested Introduction for Evan, Peri & Tyler Kramer:

Evan, Peri & Tyler Kramer are with us here today from Michigan. Tyler was diagnosed with Type I diabetes in 2005 at the age of 10. He and his parents will be spending some time with us talking about the importance of taking control of diabetes. They hope to help others with this condition. I would like to introduce you to the Kramer family.