

Teen raising funds to cure diabetes

At 12 years old, Tyler Kramer of Commerce Township is more interested in helping others than worrying about dealing daily with his diabetes.

Tyler, who has been named a 2008 Tour de Cure Youth Ambassador for the American Diabetes Association, plans to help raise \$20,000 for research on the disease he was diagnosed with in October 2006.

"I filled out an application a couple of months ago and sent it to the American Diabetes Association," said Tyler, a seventh-grader at

Clifford Smart Middle School in the Walled Lake Consolidated School District.

"I was picked because I was involved in the Tour de Cure last year," he said. "Last year, I was the third-highest fundraiser in Michigan."

Tyler, who wears an insulin pump, garnered \$3,245 for diabetes research with fundraisers at Leo's Coney Island in Commerce Township and Max & Erma's Restaurant in Farmington Hills.

He said that a few years ago he began to be thirsty all the time and used the restroom frequently — symptoms of diabetes.

"The teachers thought I was skipping class," Tyler said. "My blood sugar was over 600 ... and I then was diagnosed with diabetes."

Tyler spent two nights at

pump — a podlike device that is fixed to his skin. A needle goes into his body from the pod, delivering insulin as needed.

The pump can be programmed to inject different amounts of insulin.

"I check my blood six times a day," said Tyler. "The pump then knows what to do. If my blood sugar is too high, it can give extra insulin, and every time I eat, I give myself insulin."

Tyler says he eats five or six times a day and can eat whatever he wants "within moderation."

"My goal is to raise \$20,000 and already have \$3,300," Tyler said.

People already have donated money to the American Diabetes Association, and Tyler says there are "26 people on Tyler's Team."

On June 8 at Island Lake Recreation Area, volunteers will ride to raise money for the American Diabetes Association, Tyler said.

Race lengths range from seven to 70 miles.

To register, visit www.diabetes.org/tour.

Tyler also is raising money in a bowling event 1 p.m.-4 p.m. April 27 at Wonderland Lanes in Commerce Township.



Tyler

Tyler said.

Since he became an ambassador, he has met some famous people, including Adam Morrison of the Charlotte Bobcats of the National Basketball Association and Nick Jonas of the Jonas Brothers, an American punk/pop-rock band from Wyckoff, N.J. Nick and his brothers, Joseph and Kevin, have released two albums: "It's About Time"

in 2006 and "Jonas Brothers" in 2007.

"I met Nick in a concert Feb. 23 at the Fox Theatre," said Tyler.

Tyler's mother, Peri, said she's very proud of Tyler for "stepping up and taking his role as an ambassador and fundraiser seriously."

"He takes his diabetes seriously," she said. "He doesn't let it interrupt his normal life. He has a great attitude."

"I want to educate people about diabetes," Tyler says. "I want to raise as much money as I can so researchers can find a cure for diabetes."

"I was scared when I was first diagnosed, but I'm a lot better now. I feel fine."

As for telling other kids about having diabetes, Tyler said it's no problem once they understand.

"I just tell them I have an insulin pump," he said, "and it helps me regulate my body sugar."

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VOICES OF DISABILITY



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