

Diabetes Awareness Campaign 2013

Matte Stories

David Markle

"I'm fighting for youth living with diabetes because I believe a positive attitude can help you manage the disease better," says up-and-coming golfer David Markle, who was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes two years ago at the age of 26.

Mr. Markle, who grew up in Shelburne, Ont., has been an athlete since the age of seven. He played golf for Kent State University and represented Canada twice in international competition, turning pro in 2009. When he began to experience the first signs of diabetes – constant thirst and frequent exhaustion and trips to the bathroom – he had no idea what was wrong, until he shared his symptoms with family friends Doug and Nancy Hanzel, a doctor and a nurse.

After consulting with a health care team to confirm the diagnosis, Mr. Markle made some lifestyle changes. "Working out has become more of a habit since being diagnosed with diabetes," he says. "It's also about being more aware of the times of day I'm eating and making sure I'm not missing meals, and making sure that everything that goes into my body is fuelling my body in the right way. It provides the perfect motivation to stay healthy and active."

As one of more than nine million Canadians living with diabetes or prediabetes, Mr. Markle is lending his voice to the Canadian Diabetes Association's "Who Are You Fighting For?" campaign. It begins on October 21 and runs until the end of November to mark Diabetes Awareness Month.

Rather than feeling limited by his diagnosis, Mr. Markle is even more motivated to achieve his goals to become the best golfer that he can be and, he says, "to someday win on the PGA and European tours while proudly wearing a Canadian Diabetes Association logo on my shirt." He also wants to inspire others. "Athletics offers an incredible platform to reach out and empower people," he says. "Not only youth, but all people affected by diabetes, to help them push on and keep going, to live for their dreams."

To share your story about who you are fighting for, visit fightingdiabetes.ca. You could win a \$3,000 VISA shopping spree and other great prizes, courtesy of Novo Nordisk Canada Inc. The contest closes November 30, 2013.

Gwen Steeves

"I'm fighting for all people with diabetes who are struggling to change their lifestyle because I believe we all deserve to be healthy," says Gwen Steeves, a semi-retired nurse from Moncton, who found it difficult to manage her diabetes, which was affecting her health. Currently, some of the highest rates of diabetes and prediabetes are in Atlantic Canada.

Ms. Steeves found the help she needed through the recently launched *Live Well! Bien Vivre!* pilot program run by the Canadian Diabetes Association, Medavie Health Foundation and the Government of New Brunswick. *Live Well! Bien Vivre!* operates in six communities in the province, and pairs people living with type 2 diabetes with specially trained health coaches who offer information and support.

After signing up for the program, Ms. Steeves started working with her health coach, Claude Vautour. First, they created an action plan that identified issues, such as stress, that hindered her progress. She began incorporating breathing and other exercises into her routine. After seeing health improvements, including lowered blood sugar levels, she and Mr. Vautour focused on other goals, like increasing the vegetables in her diet from almost zero to three to five servings a day.

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"I knew what I needed to do but I couldn't seem to do it alone," says Ms. Steeves, who is pleased with her progress and excited about working on other goals to help her better manage her diabetes. "The *Live Well! Bien Vivre!* program gave me the encouragement and support to make the decision to commit to a healthy lifestyle."

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Tanyss Christie

"I'm fighting for my daughter, Avery, and all young children with diabetes because they deserve a healthy and carefree future," says British Columbia-based Tanyss Christie, a volunteer with the Canadian Diabetes Association (CDA).

After living with type 1 diabetes for almost 30 years, Ms. Christie advocates passionately on behalf of her five-year-old daughter, Avery, who was diagnosed with the disease at 22 months old, as well as other children and families with diabetes.

Ms. Christie knows firsthand about the financial pressure on families living with diabetes. "Insulin pump assistance therapy ends at 18 years old here [in B.C.]. The cost of a replacement pump can be \$7,000 or more. Not being able to continue with insulin pumps can result in poor health outcomes and higher overall costs. It doesn't make sense," she says. Plus, government coverage of diabetes medications, devices and supplies varies across provinces, meaning people living with diabetes sometimes end up bearing some of the costs. In the past year, Ms. Christie has addressed Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) in Victoria, B.C., and will continue to work with the CDA to fight for expanded insulin pump funding and for consistent care across Canada.

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"It's not a disease where you can just take a pill and it will get better," says Ms. Christie. "Diabetes is not going away. Everyone needs to get on board."

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