



Schools/Youth

THE CORRIDORS AND BEYOND



Local teens go searching for a diabetes cure

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Two Boca Raton teens will be heading to Washington, D.C., to urge lawmakers to help find a cure for an illness that's a part of their daily lives.

The teens, Samantha Stevens, 15 and Zachary Ullman, 17, have been diagnosed with Type 1 (juvenile) diabetes and will serve as Florida Delegates for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation's Children's Congress, held on June 18 through June 22.

Samantha Stevens, a student at Pine Crest School, has been living with type 1 diabetes since she was diagnosed at 5 years old. Since then, she has had to test her blood sugar up to four times a day.

Samantha says that testing her blood sugar has never been a problem. "When I was younger, I wasn't scared of getting tested because my mom would do it for me and you never think that your mom will hurt you," she said.

"Now I can test anywhere, it's not a big deal. I can even do it in the dark at a movie theater.

It's just a part of life."

Stevens is also on the Pine Crest swim team and says that the extra precautions are something she has to work through. "I have to get to practice and check my blood sugar but then I just get right back into things."

Steven's mother, Pam, said that Samantha "deals with her diabetes courageously. It's a 24/7 burden but it doesn't stop her from doing what she wants to do. It's never a question of whether or not she can do something; it's asking, 'How are we going to do this?' She makes the appropriate precautions and arrangements and goes on with her life."

Stevens was chosen to tell her story as a child delegate out of thousands of applicants because of an essay she wrote to the JDRF's Greater Palm Beach County Chapter.

Samantha says her main goal when she speaks in front of the Senate is to "Emphasize the benefits and the possibilities of stem cell research to support our cause."

Zack Ullman, who's had Type 1 diabetes since he was 15



Boca Raton youth Zachary Ullman and Samantha Stevens head to Washington to attend the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation's Children's Congress and help fight diabetes.

months old, said he will tell his story about dealing with the obstacles that diabetes creates throughout his daily life.

"It makes life very complicated," said the senior at Atlantic High School, who has an insulin pump. "If my blood sugar goes low, it becomes hard to think, communicate and move. You also have to

watch what you eat every second."

Through the educational journey, the teenager said he hopes to become an active member in finding a cure.

"I'm going to spread the word to people I know, family, friends and their friends about diabetes and the trip and make them become more active as

well," Ullman said.

Funding for embryonic stem cell research, a method to possibly find a cure for diabetes, is controversial because of ethical concerns.

At a May 31 press conference, President George W. Bush said: "I understand the folks that are deeply concerned for their - a child who might have juvenile diabetes. I know that the moms and dads across the country are in agony about the fate of their child. And my message to them is, is that there is research going on and hopefully we'll find the cure. But at the same time, it's important in the society to balance ethics and science."

Since its founding in 1970 by parents of children with type 1 diabetes, JDRF has awarded more than \$800 million to diabetes research.

The delegates and JDRF International Chairman Mary Tyler Moore will thank members of Congress for passing the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2005 under the theme of Promise to Remember Me.