

## Know who to turn to



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***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***  
**Attention: Health/Lifestyle Section Editors**

### **Local mom joins Bike-A-Long to champion daughter's diabetes battle**

Prince George – A Prince George mother of a teenage girl with diabetes is throwing her muscle behind the effort to improve the quality of life for people with diabetes by participating in this Sunday's Second Annual Canadian Diabetes Association Bike-A-Long.

Janet Cassidy, her husband Darwin, sons Bryce, Riley and Dharl, and 14-year-old daughter Dezirai, who has type 1 diabetes, are teaming up to participate in the fund raising event for the second year in a row. Money raised by pledges to cover the 8.5 km or 19 km routes will go toward the prevention, management & awareness of diabetes.

In many ways, the Bike-A-Long could be seen as a metaphor for the circuitous, sometimes uphill, noble battle that is life with diabetes. Dezirai's diabetes journey began when she was only two-and-a-half and facing a lifetime of insulin injections, carb counting, blood testing, and blood sugar lows.

Cassidy, 42, and her husband Darwin became involved with CDA from the very beginning, volunteering as camp travel chaperones when, at the age of seven, Dezirai started attending CDA's Camp Kakhamela, a camp for children with diabetes. Camp Kakhamela, an annual tradition for Dezirai, is an opportunity she wouldn't have had without CDA's steady stream of fund raising activities such as the Bike-A-Long.

Today, Dezirai is an honour roll student on the principal's list at Prince George Senior Secondary, and is active in sports such as volleyball, basketball and softball. The advent of new diabetes technology, such as the portable insulin pump she wears like a pager, has made it easier for her to keep up with the pace of her youth, greatly improving her quality of life.

“The pump gives Dezirai her insulin a little at a time, stabilizing her blood sugar. It also gives her life more flexibility,” said Cassidy. “For example, when she's ill and she doesn't feel like eating, she doesn't have to because the pump adjusts her insulin accordingly. The only time she takes the pump off is when she goes swimming or takes a bath or a shower.”

This Sunday, Dezirai will be pedal-to-pedal with her family, taking on the 19 km Bike-A-Long challenge, helping forge a better future for people like her who have to work hard to manage this chronic disease.

The Bike-A-Long launches on Sunday, Aug. 20 from the Royal Canadian Legion at 1335-7<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Registration begins at 9 a.m. and the ride is from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

“The goal of the Bike-A-Long is to promote physical activity & healthy eating as part of a healthier lifestyle. Biking, walking, running & healthy eating can help prevent type 2 diabetes (especially in children), obesity, and contribute to good diabetes management,” said Boyanne Young, northern regional coordinator, Canadian Diabetes Association Pacific Area.

Pledge minimums are \$100 per individual, \$250 per family or \$400 per corporation (corporations need a minimum of three participants). All Bike-A-Long participants who meet or exceed the pledge minimum receive a free dinner ticket to the Bike-A-Long’s Outdoor Grill. Prizes will be awarded for the most money raised within the female, male, family, and corporate categories.

Other activities:

- Silent Auction, 12 p.m. to 7 p.m. Items to be auctioned include: a white goose down duvet donated by The Bay; Trumpeter Swans framed print by Ken Ferris donated by Canfor; and dinner for two at Winstons donated by the Coast Hotel.
- Children's Activities: 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.
- Outdoor Grill: 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Tickets are \$20 each. Bike-A-Long participants receive a free ticket if they meet their minimum pledge requirement. Children under six eat free. This activity promotes healthy eating even when cooking outdoors.

Registration forms are available at the Canadian Diabetes Association office (490 Quebec St), the Prince George Citizen, the Family YMCA, Dr. Michael Dennis' office (1440 Second Ave), 94X/the Wolf building, Save-On customer service desks, and Koops Bikes.

For more information, call 250.561.9284.

The Canadian Diabetes Association works to prevent diabetes and improve the quality of life for those affected, through research, education, service and advocacy. With a presence in more than 150 communities, the Canadian Diabetes Association's strong network of assistance includes volunteers, employees, healthcare professionals and partners. The Canadian Diabetes Association – Know who to turn to.

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