



FRIENDS FOR LIFE[®]

international children with diabetes conference orlando 2012

July 2012

Dear CWD Family and Friends –

I See you.

In 2010, the first time I saw the movie *Avatar*, this simple statement struck me. I thought immediately of my CWD family, and what I feel each year when we get together in Orlando at Friends for Life. I have been chewing on this statement for two years; I mull over it on my daily runs. Last week, I watched *Avatar* again, and then spent some time online. Director James Cameron, in an interview with *Oprah*, suggested this phrase means “I understand who you are.” Paul Frommer, creator of the Na’vi language used in the movie, simply stated “I understand your soul.”

Indeed. I See you.

We’ve come together in this place for this week from all over the world. We encompass all ages, hundreds of occupations, different political views, various religious perspectives. What a diverse group we are! And yet – we aren’t. At the core of our daily lives is the same stuff. The hopes, the dreams, the fears, the daily reality of just doing what needs to be done in the next 24 hours. This may be your first *Friends for Life* conference and we may never have met, but I See you. We all do. Jump into this week with full energy and openness, and you will have an amazing experience.

Many of the faculty, staff, and volunteers with us in Orlando have been sharing their ideas, knowledge, and elbow grease at Friends for Life for a decade. Every year, there are at least a few participants and sponsors who ask me, “Why does FFL work so well? What is the magic?” I’ve been trying to figure this out for 13 years, and the truest answer I can think of is: It’s you.

To our sponsors: Once again, thank you for the tremendous support that allows this conference to get off the ground each year. FFL is a huge financial undertaking, and you have understood that over the years. As in the past, I begin this conference week feeling tremendously grateful for and humbled by your generosity and your genuine caring about our CWD families.

To all of you: Thanks for being here. Come find me and say hello.

I See you.

Friends for Life,

Laura Billetdeaux
Vice President, Education and Programs
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