



July 2013

Friends for Life: The Next Generation.

Honestly, I've never been much of a fan of sequels. Was there anything better than the original episodes of Star Trek? Or The Twilight Zone?

But FFL: The Next Generation – that is a different story. Please allow me to share a bit of CWD history. In 1995, CWD was created in Jeff Hitchcock's basement computer room in Cincinnati, Ohio, out of the need to connect his own family – including his young daughter, Marissa - with other families with type 1 diabetes. In 1999, FFL was created in my own tiny computer room, next to the noisy radiator pipes, in Manchester, Michigan. FFL arose from the need of my own family – with our newly-diagnosed 8 year old son, Sam – to meet face to face with other families with type 1 diabetes.

The first few years of Friends for Life events brought together hundreds of families from all over the world. They brought their children with them – toddlers through teens – to form the basis of our FFL community. That was over a decade ago, and those children are now adults. Some are in college. Some have professional degrees. Some are working. Some are parents themselves. They remain part of the FFL community. And now – instead of being 'kids at the conference' – they are staff and future leaders of Friends for Life programming.

There are so many of them at FFL 2013, in fact, that they deserve their own paragraph: Sierra Abel, Noor Alramahi, Carolyn Billetdeaux, Sam Billetdeaux, Jocelyn Budd, Martyn Carr, Ryan DeGross, Connor Dunlap, Maryam Elarbi, Zak Elarbi, Marisa Fox, Brian Grant, Tim Hitchcock, Kara Hunsche, Kaitlyn Karlya, Alyssa Kylo, Chad Kylo, Monica Lanning, Sarah Loebner, Austin Martin, Kelsey Martin, Chelsea Meredith, Jeremy Meredith, Tayler Michaelson, Hunter Morgen, Melissa Moulton, Jesse Nagel, Melissa Pawlowski, Jessica Plotts, Kenny Rodenheiser, Caroline Smits, Wendy Smits, Ben Stroud, James Stroud, Marissa Town, Ben Tzeel, Jenny Vandavelde.

Author Chic Thompson stated, "New ideas are like loaves of bread. They often emerge from the oven looking half-baked, homely, and lumpy. Give them a chance to rise." Friends for Life grows and improves each year because of their new ideas and yours (and yes, some are pretty lumpy at the start). I am so looking forward to the next decade of ideas. I'm excited to watch them rise and grow, and take us in new directions. FFL: The Next Generation.

Friends for Life,



Laura Billetdeaux  
 Vice President, Education and Programs  
 Children with Diabetes

