



FRIENDS FOR LIFE[®]

international children with diabetes conference *orlando 2015*

July 2015

Dear Family and Friends,

I consider myself very fortunate to have had a good idea at the right time in the right place. A good idea without the right people and resources behind it remains just that, however – an idea.

Sixteen years ago, in August of 1999, I was a mom on the CWD ‘Friends’ email list. Sam had been diagnosed with type 1 the previous August, and I’d found most of my daily support – and all of the information I needed – on the Children with Diabetes website. Our family had a vacation planned for June 2000 in Walt Disney World. I wondered – aloud, on the email list – if anyone from CWD might want to join us. How cool would that be to hang out in Disney with a few other people from CWD?

It was an idea with apparently spot-on timing. Within several months, dozens of families had responded to my email, and by that first weekend in June of 2000, 550 people from across the US showed up in Orlando to spend a long weekend together laughing, crying, playing, learning, and simply being. It felt like a giant family reunion... and it became Friends for Life.

Some of those people from June 2000 are at the conference today. They’re in leadership roles; they’re behind-the-scenes helpers; they’re sponsors. Amazingly, we’ve been at this so long that now their kids are moving into these roles as well. These incredible people have made Friends for Life happen for sixteen years by becoming the resources themselves. They bring their talents, their time, and their funding to make every year better than the last. Friends for Life never would have happened if not for every one of them.

So, to all of you, whether you are an attendee, volunteer, staff, presenter, exhibitor, or sponsor – thank you for stepping up to be the resource.

Finally, a personal and somewhat emotional thank you. The trust that you and your families place in CWD each year to bring you a meaningful conference week makes me stand just a little taller every morning. You guys rock.

Friends for Life,

Laura Billetdeaux
Vice President, Education and Programs
Children with Diabetes

