



July 2018

Dear Family and Friends, ★

Believe it or not, this is our 19th **Friends for Life** summer conference — our 10th at Disney’s Coronado Springs Resort — and our 78th event overall. Our gatherings have gone by different names: Focus on Pumping, Focus on Technology, Family Support Weekend, Focus on Best Practices, and one of my favorites, Letting Kids Be Kids. Always, these events have been about sharing, learning, and living our lives in the very best and most positive way.

This August marks 20 years since diabetes came to live at our house. It was 1998, Sam was 8 years old, Carolyn was almost 11, and Neal and I had just turned 40. We found the Children with Diabetes website and in short order came to know and love so many of our fellow CWD moms and dads. In 1999, we decided to post an invitation in the Friends forum to see if any other CWD families might like to join us on our family vacation to Disney that next summer. To our surprise, 550 people showed up. It was the most amazing weekend with friends who have since become family in the very best sense of the word. ★

Next July will mark 20 years of **Friends for Life** conferences.

Twenty years. ★

How do we acknowledge such a milestone? Our challenges, our accomplishments, our friendships?

A book! A collection of short stories and memories — about all of us, and written by all of us. What better way for the first 20 years of **Friends for Life** to be celebrated than by sharing our most memorable FFL experiences. Do you have a story to share? Please send it to me! Did something great just happen to you? Write it down and email me! Kids, too. Tell me about how you met your best friend at FFL. Or the funniest thing that happened to you. Or the one thing you will always remember about FFL. One of my favorite memories goes way back to June 2000, and the story I wrote is called “Lauren Lanning and the 500 Boxes.” It’s all of two pages long, but it’s one of the funniest things I remember over all these years.

Whether you are an attendee, a sponsor, an exhibitor, staff, or faculty, I thank you so very much for being part of this most special week. Let’s make some memories together! ★

Friends for Life, ★



Laura Billetdeaux

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