

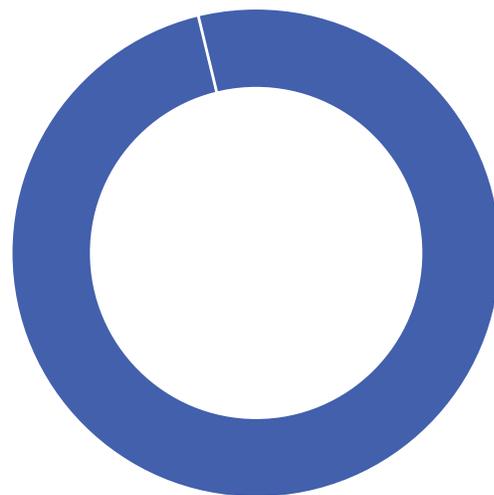


Welcome to Friends for Life® Orlando 2019

Welcome! ★

We once again gather in Orlando to enjoy the sun and warmth that it offers each July and to meet Our Tribe – our Friends for Life – and experience the indescribable bond expressed in the green and orange bands we wear. We gather to recharge, to share, to laugh, to cry, and to learn from each other and from our wise faculty.

On December 20, 2006, the United Nations passed Resolution 61/225 to establish World Diabetes Day and adopted the blue circle as its symbol. Here, we see the real blue symbol of living with type 1 diabetes—there is a small sliver cut out. That cut out represents the time in the year that we spend with our diabetes care team, perhaps eight out of the 8,760 hours in a year—less than one-hundredth of one per cent of a year. For the rest of the time, we are on our own. ★



Credit to my dear friend, Manny Hernandez

Sometimes, on our own means reaching out to others who also live with diabetes. As you look through the program, know that there is a hidden wealth of knowledge that lives within each of us—the wisdom of our collective lived experience with diabetes. One guest, Richard, brings more than 73 years with type 1. Six people bring over 50 years. Seven bring between 40 and 50 years. Twenty-four bring between 30 and 40 years. Forty-seven bring between 20 and 30 years. One hundred bring between 10 and 20 years. Two hundred and forty one are in their first decade. A few are in their first weeks. In all, those with green bracelets bring over 9,000 years of experience with type 1 diabetes. This is truly amazing. And it is from these people, who have lived, year after year, essentially on their own, from whom we will learn what it really means to thrive with type 1 diabetes.

And don't overlook the experience of those wearing orange bracelets – our parents, siblings, spouses, and children. They bring their own wisdom and experience and are here to help.

If you ever wonder why we gather here in Orlando, it is because we need each other to thrive. While we are responsible for our care 99.97% of the year, there is no reason we need do it without our Friends for Life.

Sincerely, ★



Jeff Hitchcock

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