

IDF Child Sponsorship Program



International Diabetes Federation

life for a child with diabetes

Update 1 - April 2001

Thank you for your support of the Program, which is assisting children with diabetes in developing countries. The program was officially launched at the 17th IDF Congress in Mexico City in November 2000, and is commencing support in three countries:

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Type 1 diabetes in children is very rare in Papua New Guinea. This is fortunate, as there are no long-term (> 5 year) survivors of type 1 in the country - the few cases reported have all died. Most of the population live in villages, with limited access to health care. Very few physicians in the country have any experience with type 1 diabetes. There is a free basic health system, but resources are very scarce. Insulin is provided by the Government, but glucometers and testing strips have to be privately purchased, at premium prices.

There are only a couple of diabetic educators, and they do not have paediatric training. Papua New Guinea does not have any dietitians at all working in hospitals. One of the benefits of the sponsorship program will be education of, and technical support for health professionals.

We have tremendous news to report about Jacklyne, the child whose story was featured on the fundraising brochure:



School in Jacklyne's village

Jacklyne is from the highland village of Mul. She is nine years old, the only child of her parents, and was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes in 1997. The district where her village lies was opened up to the outside world in 1949, and even today requires a four-wheel drive approach along precipitous mountain roads. The area has no electrical supply or telephones, and the Health Centre has no experience with diabetes and is frequently without even basic

medicines. So the family has been forced to stay, living in poverty, with relatives on the edge of larger highlands centres, using expired insulin and unable to monitor herself. She was thin and unwell, with visual disturbances and overall in a very perilous situation.



However with funds from the program we were able to fly Jacklyne and her father to Port Moresby General Hospital for education. Distant relatives working for HOPE *worldwide* (our partner organisation implementing the program) provided free accommodation and meals during their stay. She is now in good control, confidently giving her own injections, and performing home blood glucose monitoring, and feeling much healthier. She and her father are tremendously grateful for the support. They have returned to the highlands, confident that Jacklyne now has a future.

FIJI

Fiji has a low but increasing number of children with diabetes. Currently there are 12 managed from Lautoka, 6 from Suva, and 3 from Labasa. Insulin is provided by the Government, but glucometers and testing strips are only available intermittently in limited quantities in some hospitals. Families need to buy their own needles and syringes. Like in PNG, there are only a couple of trained diabetic educators.

We have just commenced assisting Fiji. Parent education manuals have been sent, and expert clinical advice provided. Dr. Shabnam Prakash, paediatrician at Lautoka Base Hospital, is organising a meeting with the paediatricians from each area of the country to inform them of the program and determine the best use of funds.

THE PHILIPPINES

Manila, the capital of the Philippines, is a city of 12 million people. There are about 120 children with diabetes in Metro Manila and the surrounding districts. The three centres looking after these children provide expert teaching but are generally unable to supply insulin, glucometers, testing strips, urine strips, HbA1c tests, or syringes and needles – families need to purchase these. A recent study of children from poor families showed that 40% of children were frequently missing insulin injections due to financial difficulties, and that none were having regular HbA1cs.

A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed with the paediatric diabetes centres concerned: the Philippine General Hospital, Philippine Center for Diabetes Education, and the Institute for the Study of Diabetes. Over the next two months we will begin to directly assist the children.

Once again, we thank you for your support of the program!

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