



July 11, 2009

Golf tournament helps kids with diabetes, preserves memory

On Monday, 128 golfers at Old Hickory Golf Club in Livonia, Livingston County, will pay more than they usually pay to play golf.

Because they do, some children with diabetes will get to attend a camp with other children with the same disease.

For Jim Albright of Conesus, Livingston County, there's another benefit to the annual golf outing and fundraising event that he started in 2004: It keeps alive the memory of his daughter, Jennifer Albright.

"She would have liked this because she liked kids," Albright says. "I do what I think she would have liked."

Jennifer, also the daughter of Ferne Richardson of Chili, Albright's former wife, was eight years old when she was diagnosed with diabetes.

She was 29 and a special education teacher in the Byron-Bergen High School in Genesee County when she died of complications of the disease in 2002 a week away from her marriage day.

"People came to her funeral, not her wedding," Albright says.

Albright remembers Jennifer as someone who would not let diabetes get in the way of her life.

"She never said 'poor me,'" he says. "She was a fighter. She set a wonderful example because she would just not give up."

After Jennifer's death, Albright found out about the annual camp sponsored by the American Diabetes Association that is held in this area for children with diabetes.

Albright, who operates Albright Remodeling with his wife, Sherre, decided it would be a good idea to raise money for scholarships for children whose families couldn't afford the cost of the camp.

He enlisted Chuck Smith of Smith Lumber and Hardware in Lakeville, Livingston County, as a co-sponsor, and thus began the Jennifer Albright Memorial Golf Tournament and Fundraiser. The tournament raised \$10,000 its first year. Proceeds have gone up each subsequent year and the five-year total now exceeds \$82,000. The goal is to crack the \$100,000 mark this year.

Albright stresses that all the money raised goes directly into the scholarship fund for the camp that takes place each year at the Rotary Sunshine Camp in Rush.

This year's first session, for children ages 13 through 17, ended Friday. The second session, for children ages 8 through 12, begins Sunday and goes through Friday.

The 200 campers come from throughout the state and beyond, says Brandi Koch of the Diabetes Association.

Koch and Albright emphasize that the experience is both safe and inspirational for the children. There are medical professionals on hand. Many of the camp counselors have diabetes and can serve as role models for the campers. And, perhaps most importantly, the campers learn that they are not

alone.

"They get education on diabetes," Albright says. "But they get to be a kid like every other kid."

It's safe to say that's something his daughter would have liked.

Additional Facts

To help out

Contributions toward scholarships for children attending the annual camp sponsored by the American Diabetes Association can be sent to A.D.A. Summer Camp Scholarships, c/o Brandi Koch, 160 Allens Creek Road, Rochester, NY 14618.

For information online, go to www.diabetes.org/adacampaspire.
