

JDRF International Children's Congress June 2009



Pop Star, Movie Star, Athletes, Canadian Ambassador And The President of the United States!!!

What an experience, it is almost impossible to know where to start. Did this story start in November 2004 when I was first diagnosed with type 1 diabetes, or was it when Jessica Dupuis from Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation Canada (JDRF) called my mom in January 2009 to say I had been selected as the Canadian

Delegate to attend Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International's (JDRFI's) Children's Congress? While that might not be clear, what is clear to me now is that the experience I (and the other 152 delegates) just had in Washington D.C. as part of JDRFI's Children's Congress was the most exciting time of my life.



As an International Delegate (one of five in total), I was buddied up with a US Delegate. Ryan Maloney from San Diego, California was my buddy. In the weeks leading up to Children's Congress, we talked a few times by email and shared stories and photographs. My mom and I also reached out to the other International Delegates, Josephine from Denmark, Brendan from Australia, Doron from Israel and Amy from England. So when we met in person it was not as scary as it might have been because we all sort of knew each other.

Jessica had some exciting news for me from the beginning, she had arranged for us to meet with Mr. Guy Saint-Jacques, who is the Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Canada to the US. I shared my scrapbook that I made for JDRF Canada's Kids For A Cure Awareness Week. Mr. Mike Wilson who is the Canadian Ambassador was able to come out of his meeting to talk to me. That was very exciting, we presented Rufus the Bear to Mr. Wilson and he put it on a table underneath a photograph of our Prime Minister, Mr. Stephen Harper. This was a great experience, but one that I wish I had been feeling much better for. My first day in Washington was very hard for me, my blood sugars were really out of control and I then had ketones. Those of you who know how that feels probably know how sick I was feeling, but what could I do, I had been waiting for this experience for months, and I just knew I couldn't let my family and friends down, even my country was relying on me to be at my best.



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That first afternoon we got the most exciting news. We were going to have an opportunity to meet with the President of the United States, Mr. Barak Obama, or as we were told to call him should we get the chance to talk to him, Mr. President. Well you can only imagine how excited everyone was. The buzz was very loud and kids were going around saying, "Pinch me, is it true?"

That first day was really busy, we had to perform our song, "Promise to Remember Me", and then we had our opening banquet. I had been asked to make opening remarks on behalf of the International Delegates which I was excited about and practiced many times. It went very well and then all the delegates introduced themselves to the group. It was really neat to hear all the different accents from across the US.



When I woke up on Tuesday, the first thing I said was, today we get to meet the President, not good morning, or hello, but today we get to meet the President. It was hard to eat breakfast but eat it I did and then we were off in our groups to the White House. When we got there, we were taken right up to the steps of the White House, which was really neat. Then Nick Jonas arrived and the girls went a little bit crazy and some of them screamed for him. Mary Tyler Moore and Sugar Ray Leonard were also there. Then the President came out. He was so friendly and happy. He shook lots of kids hands (even mine) and then he came and stood right next to me, I was so happy I could hardly believe it.

Wednesday was a very busy day. The first thing we did was take a bus to Capitol Hill for the JDRF Senate Hearing. What a neat experience, to be able to hear how well all our special guests spoke on behalf of all of us who are living with type 1 diabetes gave me a great sense of hope. The Senators who were present were very supportive and listened to all our messages.

After the hearing, Ryan and I met with his Congressman and the two California Senators. Ryan shared his scrapbook, we shared our stories of living with type 1 diabetes and asked for their support to renew the Special Diabetes Program next year.

I want to thank JDRF Canada for their belief in me and giving me the opportunity to represent Canada in this way, and of course all the great people who made time to talk to us, listen to us, and speak on our behalf. I would especially like to thank Mr. Mike Wilson and Mr. Guy Saint Jacques who were so nice to me.

Till the next time.

Colton Schmidt
Individual living with type 1 diabetes, JDRF Ambassador, and a "Typical" 10 year old kid!

