

GREAT KIDS

Boy using Halloween to help others



Zachary Ullman, 13, of Boca Raton, was diagnosed with diabetes when he was 15 months old. Zachary will be swapping his candy sack for a "Treat Me To A Cure" collection canister this Halloween, seeking donations to support the Diabetes Research Institute, a not-for-profit organization affiliated with the University of Miami School of Medicine.

While most kids will be trick-or-treating for candy bars on Halloween, one 13-year-old will dress-up as an IRS agent and go door-to-door collecting money.

Meet Zachary Ullman of Boca Raton.

Diagnosed with insulin dependent diabetes when he was 15 months old, Zachary will be swapping his candy sack for a "Treat Me To A Cure" collection canister, seeking donations to support the Diabetes Research Institute, a not-for-profit organization affiliated with the University of Miami School of Medicine.

"Life with diabetes is becoming unbearable and annoying," said Zachary, a seventh-grader at Loggers' Run Middle School. "I hope to be able to raise a lot of money to cure this disease."

With the help of his karate classmates at T's East-West Karate in Boca Raton, 120 collection cans will be distributed. After Halloween, Zachary's mom, Ellen, will retrieve all of the canisters and return them to DRI.

"I've been helping to raise money for DRI for 11 years now," said Zachary, who was just promoted to a blue belt in his karate class.

The Treat Me To A Cure program offers youngsters with diabetes a positive alternative to collecting candy, said Barbara Singer, director of major gifts and administration for DRI.

"Halloween is traditionally a difficult time of year for children with diabetes, since so much of the focus is on candy and sweets," Singer said. "This program will allow them to participate in the trick-or-treating festivities, while giving them a sense of pride and hope that one day there will be a cure, and children will no longer suffer from this disease."

To control his diabetes, Zachary wears an insulin pump and tests his blood six to eight times a day. With the help of the pump, which is attached by an infusion set that goes under his skin, Zachary is able to eat what he wants and take proper amounts of insulin accordingly.

"This has allowed me to live a bit more normally, and at least now I can eat junk food," he said. "But now I have braces, so with that – plus the diabetes and being a vegetarian – ahhhh!"

Zachary, who would like to one day be a videogame programmer, said he takes school seriously and generally does not like to miss class because of his diabetes.

"I'm a good student, and I play the trombone in the school band," he said. "When I need to test my blood, I do it inside my desk. I generally don't tell people at school about it until I get to know them."

Zachary said he will continue fundraising for DRI, so that once diabetes is cured, "brilliant minds can go on to cure AIDS, cancer and even the common cold."

Working to help cure diabetes, Zachary Ullman is a great kid.

For more information about the Diabetes Research Institute, visit its Web site at www.drinet.org. Stephanie Slater's Great Kids column appears every Wednesday. If you know someone you think is a great kid, Stephanie can be reached at 893-6639, fax 893-6677 or email sslater@bocanews.com.