

Success stories from Diabetic All-Stars

by Vanessa Desmarais

Diabetes is a common illness that has a significant impact on the way a person is able to live her life. Especially for children, becoming knowledgeable about the disease and understanding how to handle it can be a difficult challenge. Dustin McGowan, the pitcher for the Miami Marlins, has set to break the stereotype of limitations that is oftentimes associated with type 1 diabetes (T1D).

Partnered with the Diabetes Research Institute Foundation, McGowan established the “Dustin’s T1D All-Stars,” a program that encourages children to chase their dreams and educates them on how to live a successful life when diagnosed with T1D. The experience includes joining the players on the field during batting practice, attending an informational seminar on T1D, and then staying to enjoy the Marlins’ game. Two local residents of the Coral Springs area were lucky enough to attend this event.

One of the Coral Springs residents, Kizzy Dailey, attended Dustin’s T1D All-Stars event this past June with her 9-year-old son, Gabriel, who was officially diagnosed with T1D on January 1, 2014. The program was beneficial for both Kizzy and Gabriel. Kizzy stated that the question and answer portion of the information seminar was

a great experience for everyone there. Questions were answered by Dustin himself, who aims to communicate with the kids in an open and honest way, making sure that they understand both



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the challenges and solutions of what it is like to lead a successful life with T1D.

“The most impactful part of the program is hearing from Dustin himself. He has a unique perspective being both a T1 Diabetic and a parent of a T1 Diabetic. Having my son see someone that has achieved that level of success despite his diagnosis was most inspirational to my son,” Kizzy said.

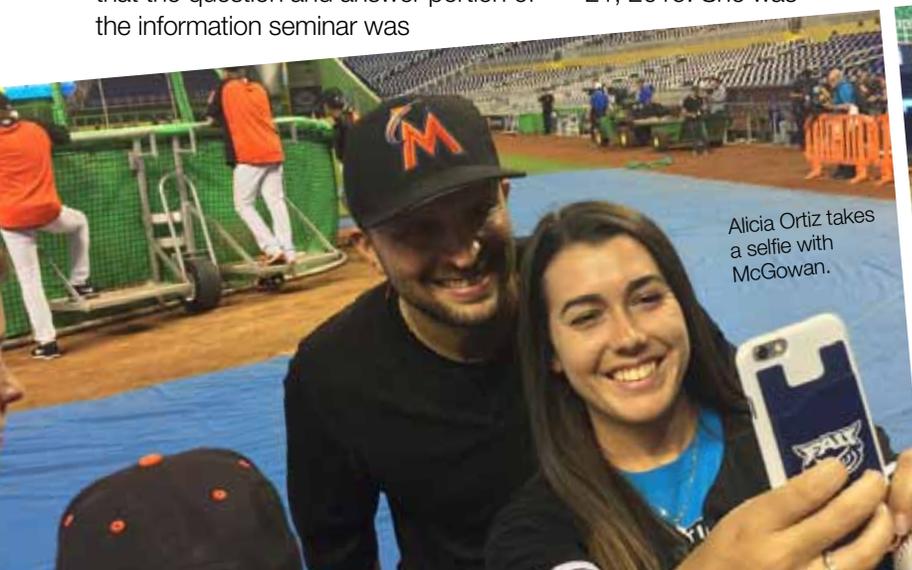
The second Coral Springs resident, Alicia Ortiz, also attended Dustin’s T1D All-Stars event this past June. Alicia, who is currently 21 years old, was officially diagnosed with T1D on March 21, 2015. She was



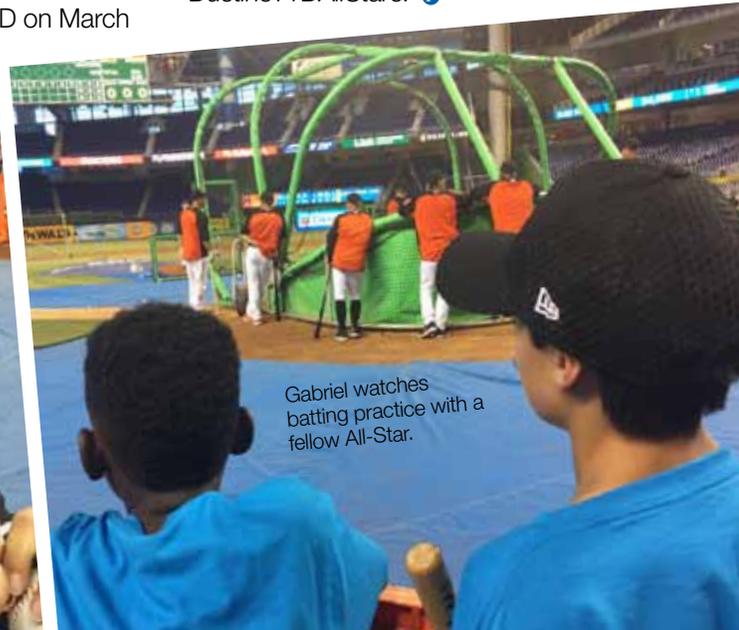
excited to see the baseball game but also thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to learn about T1D and meet others who have also been diagnosed with the disease. “The most impactful aspect of the program was to see other children and adults with Type One fighting the same battle that I am. It shows that you’re not alone,” Alicia said.

Dustin’s T1D All-Stars program gives those who have been diagnosed with T1D a chance to become educated on their condition while also being inspired to chase after their dreams. As someone who has been diagnosed with T1D and is also a parent to a child who has been diagnosed with T1D, Dustin’s goal is to make sure that people do not let their disease hinder them. Inspired by her experience at the event Alicia said, “You may have bumps in the road but don’t ever give up. And don’t let anyone tell you that you can’t reach your goals because of your disease.”

For information on how to register for this program, visit www.diabetesresearch.org/-DustinsT1DAIStars. 



Alicia Ortiz takes a selfie with McGowan.



Gabriel watches batting practice with a fellow All-Star.