



100 Reasons Why

we are grateful for the
discovery of insulin



SANOFI



Visit <https://www.sanofi.us/en/about-us/our-stories/making-a-difference/american-diabetes-month> to read additional stories from others living with, caring for or committed to people with diabetes.



Visit <https://www.teamingupfordiabetes.com/> for diabetes facts, videos and resources to help you build a diabetes management game plan.

CHAPTER 1

The Day I was Diagnosed with Diabetes

Part 1

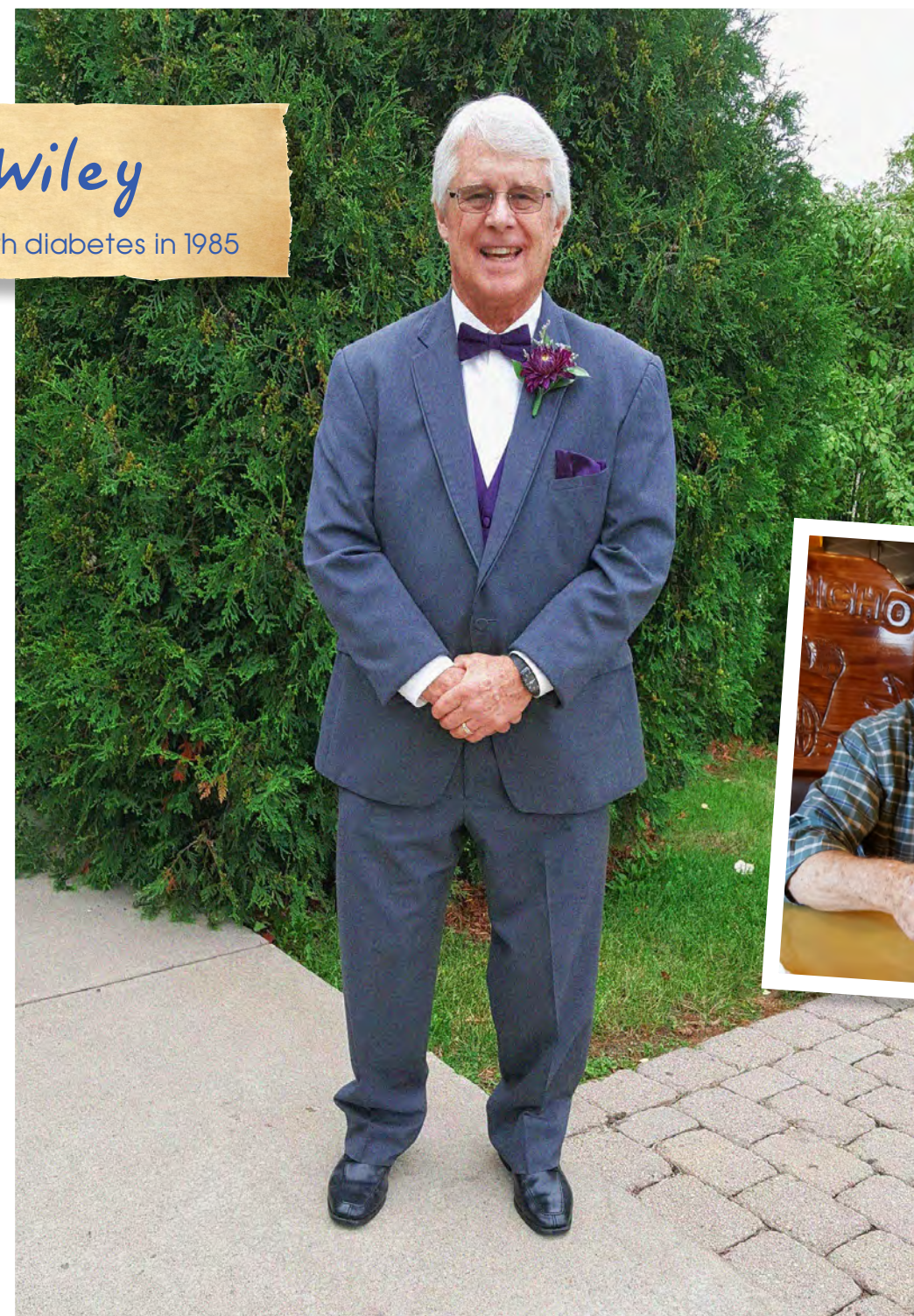
1

“Diabetes? Doctor, you must have me confused with another patient. I’m here because I slipped on the ice and hurt my back.” This is how my diagnosis and discovery of the disease came about. I was nearing middle-age and wanted to be around to see my daughters grow up and walk them down the aisle someday. I worked with my healthcare team and followed a new diet, lost some weight and began taking oral medication to manage my diabetes. However, it was not enough. My doctor suggested an insulin regimen to gain better control. This was an issue for me as a childhood incident had left me very needle phobic. I began to see a psychologist to work through my fear. Thankfully, it was not long before I was able to self-inject. Working with my healthcare team to learn how to balance insulin with diet was easier than I originally thought. Insulin, along with a healthy lifestyle, has kept my A1C below 7 and, for me, is well worth the effort.



Terry Wiley

Diagnosed with diabetes in 1985



The day I was diagnosed with diabetes I was devastated. I had so many other things going on at the time. I was morbidly obese and had already been diagnosed with congestive heart failure. I could not believe that with all that was going on, I had to add diabetes to the list. At that time, I was warned that if I did not change my lifestyle I would not live to see my 40th birthday. I had three young children, I had a full-time job and life was just hectic. I thought that this was the worst time of my life to be diagnosed with diabetes. The doctor decided to start me on insulin, and I realized I desperately needed to take better care of myself and make some changes in order for me to see my children grow up. I took my medications as prescribed and started to eat better and exercise. Not long after, I started to see some results. I was losing weight. Today, I have lost over 200 pounds and feel better than I ever have. I even became a certified firefighter and a first-responder at the age of 50! My diabetes diagnosis motivated me to change my lifestyle.



Rosie Murrell

Diagnosed with diabetes in 1989



I was 40 years old, an active physical education teacher, and had no medical issues when I went for my annual medical exam. I was in the middle of teaching when I was told that I had a phone call from my doctor. All he said was, "You have diabetes, come in for some medicine." I was shocked! It was a horrible way to get that kind of diagnosis, and I was sure there was a mistake. I went for the follow-up visit, and the doctor prescribed oral medications for me, presuming I had type 2 diabetes. He based this diagnosis strictly on my age. I began checking my blood daily. Within 3 months, I saw my blood readings go higher and higher, even though I was taking the prescribed medication. I then went to an endocrinologist who did more thorough testing, diagnosed me with type 1 diabetes, and prescribed insulin.

"I would tell everyone to go for annual exams, even if they 'feel fine.' Twenty-five years later, I still 'feel fine' and am grateful for my insulin regimen."



Ruth Braun

Diagnosed with diabetes in 1986

Spring 1979. A skinny, 24-year-old kid gets hit with the flu. Laid up for a few days, he loses a couple of pounds. He gets better. The pounds don't return. Soon he develops an unquenchable thirst. Fatigue, too. Another pound here, another pound there disappears from his reed-thin frame. Finally, he decides to get checked out. The doctor's office runs some tests on the new patient. The kid sees the doctor for the first time. He hears these ominous words, "I don't know why you came to see me, but I can tell you that you have uncontrolled diabetes. We're putting you in the hospital this afternoon."

Wham! Blindsided. Diabetes. What the heck is that exactly? Something about not eating sugar, right? (This kid has always been able to eat anything.) And the doctor said something about insulin. So now the kid's life will include insulin shots every single day? For how long? Wait...for FOREVER??!!

Not lying, it's scary. The average person doesn't really understand what having type 1 diabetes means when you're first diagnosed. Your life is about to change. Everything's a blur. Call your wife. Call work. What can you eat? How do you take insulin? It's a cliché, but this is truly the first day of the rest of your life. You learn that through partnership with your doctor, diet, exercise, motivation, and that life-saving discovery called insulin, you can take control of your diabetes.

Forty-two years later, that kid—me—is living proof.

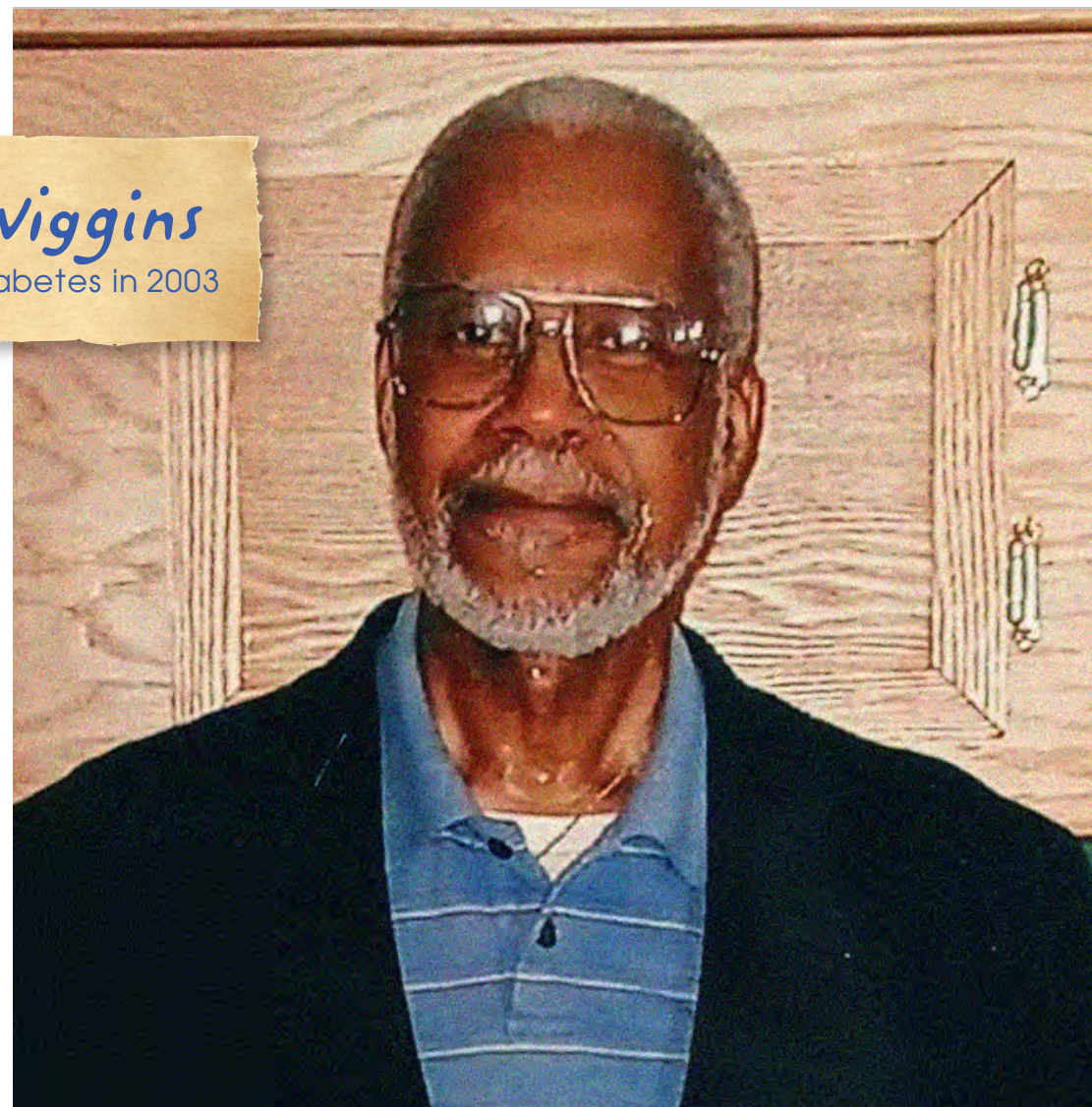
Bob Golombik

Diagnosed with diabetes in 1979



Charles Wiggins

Diagnosed with diabetes in 2003



5

I was diagnosed on Thanksgiving day 2003. I did not get to enjoy a Thanksgiving dinner - instead, I had an insulin cocktail. I was 70 years old at the time and felt devastated, confused, weak, afraid, and wondered why I was diagnosed with this disease.





Evan Kramer

Care partner to son Tyler

Waiting in my son's pediatricians' office, for what I thought would be a bladder infection diagnosis, I remembered back 40 years before when I was told my brother had type 1 diabetes. I was 8, he was 13, and I learned that he would have to urinate into a cup to test his blood sugar, eat on a very restricted diet, and would need to give himself insulin shots every day for

the rest of his life. Back then, without insulin pumps, blood glucose meters, and carbohydrate count diets, living with type 1 diabetes in my house was a disease that made you feel different. Nobody would talk about it. My brother may have looked normal, but imagine questioning everything you ate, trying to get enough exercise, and wondering how stress and hormones would affect your blood sugar... and still try to be a normal, carefree 13-year-old. My sister joined him with a diagnosis of her own at the age of 23. Their nephew - my son Tyler - was 10 when the doctor told me he had type 1 diabetes. I felt guilty and also responsible. I grew up seeing how diabetes had dominated both my siblings' lives and I made a commitment to myself that I wouldn't let Tyler live that way.

From the moment Tyler was diagnosed, when he was lying in the hospital with an IV in his arm, my wife and I made a conscious decision to be diabetes advocates and do everything we could to find help and to provide Tyler with the best treatment options available. We try to instill a positive attitude in Tyler so he doesn't let diabetes stop him from doing anything he wants. While our life has changed dramatically and dealing with diabetes is often overwhelming and challenging for all of us, it also has had a positive side. Tyler has received numerous awards and recognition for his fundraising and community service efforts, including the 2009 American Diabetes Association Cure-Care-Commitment Award. As a family, we've raised over \$50,000 for diabetes research towards discovering a cure.



Tyler Kramer

Diagnosed with diabetes in 2005

October, 3rd, 2005. I remember I was walking home from school, telling my friends I had a check-up at the doctor so I couldn't play soccer with them. I knew something was up; I had symptoms but didn't connect the dots to type 1 diabetes-I didn't know what it was, yet.

That day was also a holiday; my whole family was waiting for my mom, dad, and I to get home to celebrate, but we couldn't stay. We drove to the hospital instead and stayed there for the following 3 days. It was scary, overwhelming and I didn't understand what was going on; I was 10 years old. Nurses and doctors were coming into my room, saying all these big words, pricking my finger, giving me insulin shots, and telling me that this was how I was going to live for the rest of my life.

In the hospital, most people around me were sick or injured. I wasn't hurt so I thought I was sick too, like having a cold or the flu. It took a while for me to realize it wasn't going away.

When I was released from the hospital, I went to soccer practice that night because I didn't want diabetes to stop me from doing anything. From that week on, I grew up by embracing my situation rather than mourning, and educating rather than being ashamed.

For me, managing type 1 diabetes is the most challenging, frustrating, & demanding thing to deal with—physically, emotionally & mentally. Every day is a battle with my blood sugar. Type 1 diabetes gives me pain... but it makes me stronger. Diabetes doesn't own me, I own my diabetes; I embrace it. I'm an advocate and educator because of what diabetes has done for me.

7

I live in Los Angeles and was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes in 1999 at the age of 47. I was told by my gynecologist that I was borderline diabetic and should see my primary doctor for further testing. I was shocked and confused because I didn't have a history of diabetes in my family. After my doctor confirmed the diagnosis, I was still confused and totally in denial. My first grandchild was born the same year, which changed my whole world around. I knew then that something had to be done to maintain my health. I researched how to live with diabetes and learned about what damages it can cause to your body. After finally understanding it (and it took a while) my whole world changed. I started on orals, and eventually I was prescribed insulin. I am still struggling with my A1C however, my blood testing shows things are moving in the right direction! I learned to live better with diabetes by eating right with a solid meal plan, managing my weight, and exercising regularly.

Gloria Cunningham

Diagnosed with diabetes in 1980



Hélène Colon-Raphael

Diagnosed with diabetes in 1980



8

I was diagnosed July 1, 1987. It was the scariest time of my life. Around the time of my diagnosis, AIDS was a prominent news story. I had recently graduated from college and had unintentionally lost over 30 pounds. My dad was fearful I had AIDS, but it turned out I had diabetes. I was petrified that I had a disease with no cure. As a new worker trying to navigate insurance, I needed help.

My Dad met me at the pharmacy and paid for my meter, syringes and insulin. I went home and threw out all the items I had at home that had sugar as I didn't know what else to do at the time. I've since learned that for me, with diet, exercise and insulin, I can do and eat anything within reason.



Kat Wong

Diagnosed with diabetes in 1999



9

They say memories don't really stick until after you are three and a half years old. Diagnosed at three years and eight months, diabetes has always been part of my life. I probably tell my diagnosis story WAY differently than the rest of my family - I loved being in the hospital! It was like staying overnight at a fancy new hotel where I got the reclining bed and my mom was stuck on the couch. We spent the days playing bingo on the TV, hanging out in the playroom with all the other kids that were "vacationing," and entertaining our visitors who were showering me with gifts. Sure, it was inconvenient being hooked up to different tubes and getting poked and prodded by strangers, but boy were those juice boxes yummy. Since that lavish resort stay, my thoughts about hospitals are a little less glamorous, but my feelings towards diabetes haven't changed much. I really don't know any other life than one filled with test strips, glucose tabs, insulin injections, pump wires, and carb counting.



I vividly remember the day I was diagnosed with diabetes.

I was 19 years old and in the summer of my sophomore year of college. I had not been feeling well so I went to the University Health Center for a check-up. The doctor sat me down and told me I had sugar in my urine. I knew exactly what that meant because my mother had lived with type 1 diabetes since I was born. Still, when the doctor said, "You have diabetes." It hit me like a ton of bricks. I was young, scared and alone at school. I had watched my mother live with diabetes and never imagined myself being diagnosed with the same disease. My family rushed to my support and my father, being a physician, started educating me on what I needed to do next. I changed my lifestyle of eating late-night pizzas and began exercising again, something I had totally given up after going to college.

Now, almost 30 years later, I can say that I am no longer that terrified, young woman. I have learned so much from living with diabetes and feel empowered and confident that I can still live my best life. Diabetes is a part of me and I have not let it stop me from achieving my dreams, becoming a physician, riding my bike, hiking and traveling. I know that if I take care of myself and my diabetes, I can do whatever I want and live life to the fullest.

Lakshmi Seshadri, MD

Diagnosed with diabetes in 1992



