

PRESS FOCUS

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Reporter Mentors Delco Boy On Handling Diabetes

By Jane Galloway

Springton Lake Middle School pupil Brad Feinberg and FOX Philadelphia reporter and anchor George Mallet are buddies.

They are part of a program launched last month by Moore Eye Institute and Moore Eye Foundation to pair adults who have diabetes with young juvenile diabetics.

Juvenile diabetes is the form of the disease in which the pancreas stops producing insulin and the patient must take insulin injections for the rest of his life. It usually strikes people before the age of 30.

Mallet was 18 when he learned he had the disease. Brad was diagnosed seven years ago when he was 5.

Brad of Upper Providence and Mallet met for the first time on Nov. 20 in the Moore suite at the Healthplex Pavilion II in Springfield. They shared their stories with other juvenile diabetics, their buddies and family members.

Besides Brad and Mallet, speakers at the special Diabetes Month program were Father Steven Marinucci of St. Clements Church in Philadelphia, Brad's father, Wynewood optometrist Dr. Bruce Feinberg, and his mother, Trish Feinberg, and Dr. Leonard Ginsburg, medical director of the Moore Eye Institute, who initiated the buddy program.

Ginsburg specializes in the pre-

vention, diagnosis and treatment of eye diseases caused by diabetes. He encouraged the young diabetics to accept the disease as a challenge and take control of their own care. He told them that by eating and exercising properly and taking their medication, they can avoid most of the complications associated with being diabetic.

The Feinbergs told how their family has coped with Brad's diabetes.

"Brad has been totally involved with his (own) care since the beginning," said his father. "When he leaves home later in life, he will understand what he has to do."

Mrs. Feinberg said it was difficult at first to manage Brad's diet and learn about carbohydrate counts and insulin injections. Then they went to a diabetic educator who recommended that Brad receive an insulin pump because insulin shots were "not working" for them and Brad's blood sugar levels were "way out of control."

Doctors at DuPont Hospital for Children gave Brad an insulin pump when he was 9. At the time, he was the youngest patient to receive a pump at that hospital. His success encouraged them to give pumps to other youngsters.

The pump has given the family "a whole new level of freedom," Mrs. Feinberg said.

An insulin pump acts like a pancreas and injects a steady, pro-



Brad Feinberg of Upper Providence is part of a new Moore Eye Buddy program at Moore Eye Institute in Springfield. His mentor buddy is FOX Philadelphia anchor George Mallet. From left, front row, (in "buddy" shirts) are Brad, Devin Mossor of Ridley Park, Jamie Aiello of Concord Township, Melissa Stamp of Essington, Amy Touhill of Springfield; back row mentors and program director from left are George Mallet, Father Steven Marinucci, Dr. Leonard Ginsburg, John Halota of Newtown Township (retired detective with the Marple Police Department) and Jim Taylor, Haverford Township, District manager for the Southeastern Pennsylvania Area office of the American Diabetes Association.

grammed amount of insulin directly into the body. It largely replaces the daily regimen of insulin shots juvenile diabetics must take. It does not, however, do away with finger sticks to check blood sugar levels. Users must be familiar with the carbohydrate equivalent of everything they eat and be able to do simple math calculations in order to adjust their insulin intake accordingly.

Brad checks his blood sugar with a finger prick "four or five times a day" and says the prick doesn't bother him.

"You get used to it," he says.

His parents say they have tried to let him do whatever he has wanted to do, as long as he had "the OK" of his doctors.

He takes piano lessons, plays trumpet in a jazz band at school and does interviews for the school's video club. He also plays tennis, football and basketball, enjoys over-nights at friends' homes, goes camping and attends parties. He

understands the carbohydrate value of party foods like ice cream or pizza and knows how to give himself additional insulin if necessary.

Last summer he attended two camps for juvenile diabetics -- Camp Victory, near Harrisburg, and Camp Setebaid, in the Poconos. Both are under the auspices of the American Diabetes Association and all campers and counselors are diabetics. Besides enjoying a full program of camp activities, the young diabetics learn how to be self-sufficient in dealing with their disease.

Campers at Camp Victory were housed in cabins, but at Camp Setebaid they slept in tents in the woods.

Brad especially enjoyed the more rustic tenting experience.

"It was pitch black in the woods - I liked that!" he says.

Not many of the campers his age have an insulin pump, and Brad was able to show them the advantages of one.

Brad's close friends at school know he is diabetic, which Mallet says is the correct approach.

"It's important to have your family and the friends you hang around with know so they will know what to do if you 'get loopy.'"

Mallet says that when he was diagnosed in 1978, he didn't want anyone to know he had diabetes.

"I wanted to pretend I didn't have it," he admits.

Then he learned that Bobby Clark of the Flyers was diabetic and he was impressed that a pro athlete could have the disease and be willing to talk about it.

Now, Mallet says, he readily admits that he is diabetic and talks about the disease on the news whenever he can.

Brad is excited that his new buddy has invited him to tour the FOX Philadelphia studio. And he may get a chance to practice his interviewing skills for the school video club.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Delaware County Kennel Club Meets

The Delaware County Kennel Club, an all-breed dog club, will hold its monthly meeting, 8 p.m., Tuesday, Jan. 16 at the Aston Township Building meeting room, 233 Pennell Road, Aston. Marc and Denise Collins of Media will lecture on the qualities of the West Highland Terriers. They will be accompanied by their Westie "Casper." Casper is in the top 20 Westies in the country. For information, call 610-891-1875.

