

Meet Our 2013 Duluth Walk Ambassadors - Emma and Anna Arntsen

As sisters, Emma and Anna Arntsen share a lot of things, but the one thing they wish they didn't share is Type-1 diabetes. In early 2003, just after turning 3, Emma was diagnosed with Type-1 diabetes. She had been potty-trained both day and night for over half a year when she started having frequent potty accidents, was constantly asking for water and then guzzling entire sippy cups of water. Since she had an aunt with Type-1 diabetes, we were aware of the common diabetes symptoms and were watching for them. After taking her to her pediatrician and voicing concern about her symptoms, we were told her thirst was due to dry winter air and were sent home without any tests being done. When her symptoms persisted and worsened, we took her back to the clinic and insisted that her blood sugar be tested. She was diagnosed with Type-1 diabetes, admitted to the hospital that night and was hospitalized for a week while we got her high blood sugars and ketones under control and learned how to manage her diabetes.



Ten-and-a-half months later, Emma's younger sister, Anna, who had just turned 2, had a bad cold, was coughing a lot and was frequently asking for water. We thought her thirst was due to her cough until she had 3 diapers in a row that were saturated just as if they had been dunked in a bucket of water. Before we even tested her blood sugar, we knew we had seen these symptoms before. The blood sugar meter read "HI" and we immediately made appointments to see a doctor to confirm her Type-1 diagnosis and obtain the prescriptions necessary for her live a healthy life. Both girls learned how to poke their own fingers and use their blood glucose meters at a young age...Anna was just 2 ½ years old. They both also started using insulin pumps just a few months after they were diagnosed.

Emma is now 12 years old and in the 7th grade and Anna is 10 years old and in the 5th grade. They do not remember what it is like to live without Type-1 diabetes but they do not let it keep them from doing the things they love to do. Emma loves to dance on a competitive team, ski downhill and cross-country, swim, bike, play tennis and be with friends. Anna loves to play soccer, softball, tennis, ski downhill and cross-country, swim, bike, be with friends and is working toward a black belt in Tae Kwon Do. Both girls also enjoy playing flute.

Emma and Anna have both attended the American Diabetes Association's Camp Daypoint and Camp Needlepoint in Hudson, Wisconsin, and have loved it! We feel so blessed to have these camps available to kids to give them a place to "feel normal" for a week and to give us peace of mind knowing they are safe there! Both girls have said they would like to be counselors there one day.

The Arntsen Ladybugs have participated in the ADA's Step Out Walk for several years and have raised approximately \$8,000. We hope and pray for a cure every day, because insulin is not a cure, it is life support! Please join us in helping to make a cure possible as well as to help the ADA continue to offer the opportunity for kids to go to their camps. Please STEP OUT with us at the Step Out: Walk to STOP Diabetes on April 6, 2013!

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