Diabetes SA Support Always

Kellion Victory Medal Awards

We're here to listen, here to advise, here to help lighten the load of living with diabetes.

Support always… 69 years and beyond

Back in 1952 the co-discoverer of insulin, Dr Charles Best, travelled to South Australia to give a series of lectures.

During an impassioned speech, he suggested that a diabetic association be established here in our state.

The very next year our organisation opened its doors.

We've now celebrated over 69 years at the frontline of diabetes support in South Australia.

We're here to help people living with diabetes.

To empower people with information, education and understanding.

To ensure they have access to products and services that help them manage their diabetes.

To raise awareness of the risk of diabetes in our community and facilitate early detection and prevention programs.

To fund new research to discover new treatments for the many South Australians living with diabetes today.

Most of all, we're here to give people living with diabetes personalised, individual support whenever they need it.

Diabetes SA.
It's South Australian for Support Always.

Kellion Victory Medal Recipients 2020

The Kellion Victory Medal was named after Claude Kellion when diabetes claimed the life of his son John Claude. A successful business man, Claude established the Kellion Diabetes Foundation in John's memory. In view of his outstanding contribution towards diabetes in Australia, Mr Claude Kellion AM was invited to have his name associated with the Kellion Victory Medal Scheme.

Silver-plated 50 year and gold-plated 60 year victory medals have been produced and provided, together with certificates. There is also a platinum medal for 70 years and a certificate and plaque for 75 and 80 years. Thus the Kellion Victory Medal Scheme was established. Read the full stories of the lives of our Kellion Victory Medal recipients by visiting diabetessa.com.au.

75 years of living with type 1 diabetes

75

Geoffrey Koch

I developed type 1 diabetes at the age of two and a half. My parents had a farm at Cockaleechie on Eyre Peninsula and medical help was not readily available, we had to travel 83kms to Port Lincoln, on a dirt road, to get insulin supplies.

Little was known about diabetes and the specialist told mum that I would probably only have a lifespan of about 10 years – but here I am 78 years later and still going strong. I still have the diabetic handbook which was printed in 1944 that was a guide which mum used to work out my diet.

I was a farmer till retiring in Willaston about 19 years ago. I was fortunate to meet my lovely wife Beverly and we have been married 53 years, she deserves a medal for her understanding of my condition.

We have three lovely children and their partners and eight grandchildren who keep me young and active. I enjoy bike riding, fishing and camping and doing repairs in my shed.

Thank you Diabetes SA for a meeting held on insulin pumps, which we attended about 14 years ago. Doing research online, we found an 86 year old man who said that it was not too hard to manage a pump. So I thought let's do it and it's best thing I ever did and now continuous glucose monitoring is available – it all has made control a lot easier.

A special thank you to my endocrinologist Dr Anthony Zimmermann and staff for their patience and understanding of my condition.

70 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Robert Hall

I was first diagnosed in January 1950 and after found to be insulin intolerant and spent an extended period in the RAH. Initially a top specialist slept by my bedside. The treatment I received was beyond excellent and I probably subconsciously wondered how this devotion could be repaid.

A short time later, I was asked to join an unofficial group endeavouring to disseminate diabetic education.

Later I became an inaugural member of The Diabetic Association of SA and was asked to be a committee member, and 20 plus years later I was awarded life membership.

A very few years after this, I took up the position of Secretary of the Diabetes Federation of Australia for three years. On expiry, I was asked to stand for President of that organisation. This necessitated attending triannual meetings of the International Diabetes Federation.

Representing Australia, I attended World Congress's in Buenos Aries, Nairobi, Vienna, Amsterdam, and Delhi and regret not being able to attend Sydney in 2000 as an honoured guest.

At my first Congress in Buenos Aries, I sat for two plus days and didn't understand a word, as attendees were mostly GPs who were familiar with scientific research. Since then, dissemination of diabetic education worldwide has been made easier.

I have found that 'total acceptance' of diabetes and its requirement is a necessity. It is a balance which must be obeyed.

None of these achievement would have been possible without the huge help of my very understanding wife Elizabeth a social worker, elder son Simon a GP, Virginia a senior educator and Sam an endocrinologist.

70

60 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Dale Caville

Diagnosed with type 1 diabetes in late 1960 at the age of 16 years after a year with all the associated symptoms being misdiagnosed, required rapid life reassessments and attitute to the lifelong disciplines that would be required for a hopeful longevity.

I recall being told that if I did the right thing I would last hopefully to about my mid-fourties. Being somewhat of a perfectionist helped no end in early testing and logging of urine tests with Fehlings Solution then moving on to a dissolvable tablet urine testing system which I performed very frequently especially at night. Insulin at that time was a single dose of Lente with diet adjustment for different times of the day as part of the control for steady glucose levels. Despite the constant attention given to my diabetes, I recall several hospitalisations for 'stabilisation' being necessary in the early days. With the passing years easier control was achieved with multiple bolus shots before meals and an evening basal shot, a Novorapid and Lantus regimen.

The last ten years the use of an insulin pump has further refined living with type 1 diabetes. My latest control aid is the use of a continuous glucose monitoring device a long way from the Fehlings solution. Diabetes research has provided me with a better understanding, knowledge and treatment solutions navigating the way for a much longer life than was initially expected.

Heather Ruth Matthews

I was aged 14 years (in fact I was in hospital for my birthday) when the doctors discovered that I had diabetes. I had been drinking copious amounts and needing to go to the toilet many times, both day and night. I remember while in hospital I had to test my urine with drops of urine and a testing stick. They also taught me how to give myself injections, which at the time seemed to me, as a young teenager, rather daunting.

It is amazing the changes that have been made in diabetes in the last 60 years. When I came home from hospital, I had a glass syringe and stainless steel needle that had to be boiled once a week, and I only had a new needle about once a month. At this stage I was only having an injection once a day and doing regular urine test twice a day. I had to have regular blood tests, which may have been once every couple of months.

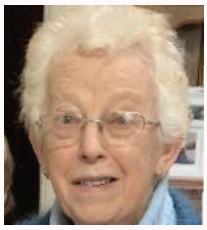
Then came disposable injections with new needles for each injection. Then a few years ago, they switched my injections to twice a day. As well as injections I was kept on a fairly strict diet. No sugar, no sweets, and no sugary drinks, and minimal amount of carbs. The twice daily injections remained for quite a few years, but as my blood glucose levels didn't seem to be very good, I was switched to three injections a day.

Since then, I have had up to five injections a day with NovoRapid and Lantis being used, and now I have a pump and sensor, and finger prick about three times a day.

The improvement that this has made to my diabetes management and lifestyle has been amazing.

My granddaughter (aged 9) who also lives with diabetes, will probably see in her lifetime even more improvements.

60
years of living with type 1 diabetes



Ruth Eleanor Richards

I woke from a coma; in the Queen Victoria Hospital on 20 February 1960, to the diagnosis of type 1 diabetes and to the tragic news of the stillbirth of my son due to the missed diagnosis of my conditon.

With my dearly loved and devoted late husband Jim by my side we faced the grief and difficulties the diabetes diagnosis presented eventuating in the fulfillment of our desire to have a family of our own with the safe arrival of a daughter, followed by a son.

Together with my late husband Jim I was able to lead a full and rewarding life that saw us volunteer in our local community, travel overseas, become proud grandparents to three grand-daughters and great-grandparents to four little ones.

Prior to retirement I worked as a librarian for over thirty years in the local public library.

I have seen great advances in diabetes management and education over the 60 years since my diagnosis. These advances include – the types of insulin available, the method of insulin administration, the tracking of blood sugar, the dietary advice provided and its relationship to insulin therapy.

My advice to anyone facing a diabetes diagnosis would be “think positively, listen to your body and be aware of what is right for you. Combined with regularly testing your blood glucose levels, leading a healthy lifestyle with emphasis on appropriate diet and exercise will all help towards achieving manageable health.”

Dianne Schleyer

I have seen many improvements in my 60 years of living with type 1 diabetes, from glass syringes in metho to what I am using today, even if I have a few disabilities with my vision and feet. I feel that the most important things to good health are a good diet, walking my dog ‘Zoe’ and giving her lots of love, going to gym twice a week, riding my bike every day on the footpath, and my husband who keeps me on the straight and narrow.

“DIABETES RESEARCH HAS PROVIDED ME WITH A BETTER UNDERSTANDING, KNOWLEDGE AND TREATMENT SOLUTIONS, NAVIGATING THE WAY FOR A MUCH LONGER LIFE THAN WAS INITIALLY EXPECTED.” DALE CAVILLE

Photo credit:
Alex Kwong of Alex Kwong Photography

Alan “Andy” Andrews

Andy was surprised to realise that at age 29 he had “juvenile” diabetes - now known as type 1 diabetes. He began his diabetic journey with a single re-usable needle, a glass syringe, pig insulin and a pack of urine testing strips.

These now seem so primitive, yet they were the instruments which gave him life. Fifty years after diagnosis, thanks to ongoing diabetes research and a superb medical team, he was using the amazing technology of an insulin pump and continuous glucose monitoring. Andy was never the type of person to let diabetes or its complications hold him back and continued his active working and social life. He loved food, he loved being with people, he loved singing with his glorious Welsh voice, he loved his family, he loved life.

Andy’s greatest strengths as a person with diabetes were his willingness to learn and understand diabetes, his openness with others about his condition and his acceptance that this was simply the way he was. His legacy to his four children, twelve grandchildren and five great-grandchildren is how he proved that life may not always be simple but can always be lived to the full.

Lynette Gibson

Living with diabetes for 50 years has been a very up and down process but as I have made it to 87, I guess that I could have had worse complaints.

50

years of living with type 1 diabetes

Lesley Hendrickson

I have been living with diabetes since 1964, spending almost six weeks in hospital learning how to inject myself with insulin. The needles were so thick it was frightening to use them.

My teen years were trial and error. I went into many comas but as I learnt more about the condition, I learnt how to adjust my dosage. I kept working and had to walk six miles a day to my workplace, so I had to keep an eye on my diabetes.

I married, had two children and kept working until I was 55. Then out of the blue I found out I had a grandson looking for a place to live. I gave up work to support him, and then I went on to foster three more children. Advancements in diabetes have meant that the needles got thinner and better to use – and the testing got easier. My diabetes has not stopped me from enjoying life and I believe I’ve taken care of myself over the years.

50 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Susanne Holtham

I was three and half years old when diagnosed with type 1 diabetes and I was staying with nanna at Victor Harbor at the time.

I was so sick that nanna had to arrange to get me to the doctors. I was taken by bus to Old Noarlunga. The bus was met by Dr Tassie at Darlington. By this time, I was unconscious and was taken to Women's and Children's Hospital in Adelaide. I was in hospital for a long time.

One day I went missing and the staff could not find me. I was found cuddling my doll hiding in a bedside cupboard, turning blue as it was hard to breathe in there. I did not want the nurse to inject me. Mum came in every day to learn how to give me injections.

I can remember seeing the psychologist at the hospital and he asked me questions about ink spots. My poor brothers witnessed me having many hypoglycaemic events over the years. They were very supportive even up to today.

My poor mother needs a medal for looking after me. I was a difficult child and difficult to feed. I would not eat vegetables and would eat meat first. Then mum would make me vanilla squares.

The pens today are much better than the glass syringes we started on. I have used every insulin available over the years. Even a bleed on the brain in 2011 has not stopped me, I am a fighter!! 58 years with type 1 diabetes and still here!

Owen Chapman Prior

In 1967, I was working as a mechanic with Lloyd Bros in Peterborough when I was diagnosed with diabetes at the age of 40 years.

I learnt a lot fairly quickly about glucose, carbohydrates etc. and I read and learnt a lot from the Diabetes Association magazine and my wife used a lot of recipes as well. Good plain food was always best like roast lamb, beef or chicken with plenty of greens, potato, rice or lentils.

In 1984, I had a heart attack, a cardiac infarction that was actually caused by poor control of my diabetes.

I was testing with urinal strips and my blood sugar was at dangerous levels. The cardiologist I consulted in Adelaide told me that the pain I was getting was sugar not my heart, and to go home and buy a blood glucose monitor which cost me in those days $200!

Since then I have done my best to keep my levels under reasonable control.

It is most important to know and understand diabetes yourself. You are the only one who knows your body and what it needs.

50 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Wendy Ann Schemmell

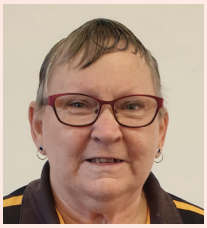
I developed diabetes when I was five years old. I remember my mother sterilising my metal and glass syringe/needles each day.

At eight I attended my first diabetes camp. They were great fun and important, as I learnt to inject myself and I realised I was not the only one with diabetes. Around 11 my body started changing, causing me to be hospitalised six times for re-stabilisation. At home I was treated the same as my three siblings and sport was encouraged. I started gymnastics at six and stopped at 40. At 12, I began training as a gymnastics coach stopping in 2012. I played volleyball in my middle teens, playing for almost 20 years. For 33 years I was the Children's Librarian at the Payneham Library.

In 1987 I became pregnant. Despite some medical issues my son was delivered five weeks early in perfect health. Following this, I had a bleed behind my right eye resulting in a lens implant operation, I was 29 years old. In my late forties my left eye was also done.

Diabetes has been just part of my life, I have never felt limited. However, in 2018 I developed rheumatoid arthritis. The medication required to control the arthritis impeded my diabetes control and has limited the use of my hands, so my husband is now my carer.

I am on a new diabetes routine which is helping, so the future looks brighter.



Julie Therese Whiting

I have had diabetes since 19 June 1970. It was hard in the beginning – adjusting to the insulin and pricking my fingers every day. But soon I had it under control.

When I had hypos, my mum used to give me teaspoons of honey which I didn't like. Absolutely hated it in the end. I'd have honey all over my face in my hair just everywhere. My mum never gave me an injection and whilst I lived at home. I gave myself all of my injections.

My dad passed away in 2007 and my mum recently passed away six months ago at the age of 87 years on the 26 July 2020. I miss her very much.

Since 2011, I've had an insulin pump, which improved my blood glucose levels immensely. I love the pump therapy system, now I have a sensor and really love how it works. My blood sugar levels are really great nowadays. My sugars go up when I get upset or when I worry about things... which is only sometimes nowadays.

I hope this inspires everyone who reads this.

The place where hope and science meet Research.

Driven by the alarming rise in the number of people diagnosed with diabetes, our organisation recently announced a series of research initiatives that gives hope to all people at risk of or living with diabetes.

Our vision to fund research through the Diabetes SA Research Grants program is one of our key strategic priorities that will enable us all to change the future for all people living with and at risk of diabetes.

Use the QR code to donate to Diabetes SA's Research Appeal

Join us in making a difference by donating to our Research Appeal.

Research is at the heart of everything

Diabetes SA
Support Always

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