

News Release

ADA Youth Advocate recruited to frontline in battle against diabetes

The International Diabetes Federation (IDF) has selected Dana Lewis from Huntsville, Alabama, as one of 25 Youth Ambassadors to support the IDF-led 'Unite for Diabetes' campaign to pass a UN Resolution on diabetes.

Alexandria, VA (November 9, 2006) – The 'Unite for Diabetes' campaign launched by the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) has chosen Dana Lewis, the American Diabetes Association's (ADA) 2005-2006 National Youth Advocate, as one of its 25 Youth Ambassadors from around the world. The Ambassadors will serve as official advocates for the United Nations Resolution on diabetes and are asking governments throughout the world to take action to support it.

As part of her role as Youth Ambassador, Dana will attend a Youth Leadership Workshop in Cape Town, South Africa, that will take place during the World Diabetes Congress on December 3 – 7, 2006. The Ambassadors will play an active role in the Congress, expected to attract around 10,000 participants from every region of the world.

"I am honored to be a part of such an important cause," Dana said. "Diabetes is affecting more people than ever. Our world leaders must ensure that everyone with diabetes has what they need to take care of themselves."

Nearly 21 million children and adults have diabetes in the United States alone. Worldwide, diabetes has now become an epidemic, affecting more than 230 million people—or 6 percent of the world's adult population. This number is expected to exceed 350 million in less than 20 years if action is not taken.

IDF is leading the global diabetes community in a concerted effort to secure the Resolution. The 'Unite for Diabetes' campaign highlights the alarming rise of diabetes worldwide and encourages UN Member States to vote in support of the Resolution at the United Nations. The People's Republic of Bangladesh is the lead sponsor of the Resolution and is seeking the support of a broad coalition of UN Member States.

Applications for the position of Youth Ambassador were invited from diabetes representative organizations in over 150 countries. Dana was chosen as a global advocate for diabetes because of her enthusiasm, leadership capabilities and commitment to diabetes advocacy and awareness that she has shown as a volunteer with the American Diabetes Association.

At just 18 years old, Dana is a seasoned diabetes advocate. In her role as 2005-2006 National Youth Advocate for the American Diabetes Association, she has lobbied members of Congress for increased federal funding for diabetes research and programs. During the summer of 2006 alone, she traveled over 17,000 miles, meeting with over 2,000 kids at diabetes camps across the U.S. She not only spoke with campers about being physically active and taking care of their diabetes but also encouraged them to become diabetes advocates like herself.

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National Office

1701 North Beauregard Street
Alexandria, VA 22311
Tel: 703-549-1500

Diabetes Information

call 1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383)
online www.diabetes.org
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Diabetes Association is to prevent and cure diabetes and to improve the lives of all people affected by diabetes.

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Among Dana's other accomplishments are her service as the only youth representative on the American Diabetes Association's planning committee for "America's Walk for Diabetes," its national signature fund-raising event. Prior to becoming National Youth Advocate, Dana implemented "Teen Team," the first diabetes support group for teenagers in Alabama. She plans to start a similar group at the University of Alabama where she is currently a freshman.

"One of my goals is to educate people about diabetes wherever I go," says Dana. Now she is entering the international arena, adding her voice to thousands of people around the world who are urging the United Nations to recognize the seriousness of the diabetes epidemic and to make a difference for the more than 230 million people now living with diabetes.

Diagnosed with type 1 diabetes at age 14, Dana felt as though her world had been turned upside down. As she wrote in a recent online journal entry to fellow teenagers with diabetes, "I was too scared to tell my friends that now I was 'different,' that I no longer completely fit in with them. I was angry, I was tired, and I was sad. I hated diabetes with all my heart."

Today, four years after her diagnosis, Dana's world has indeed turned upside down. "Diabetes has made me cry quite a few times these past four years," she continued in her journal. "Yet diabetes also has given me strength, poise, maturity and an education of a lifetime. I feel confident in all aspects of my life now and have learned to 'roll with the shots,' so to speak." Dana goes on to note, "Four years ago, I considered my 'sentence' of diabetes to be the end of everything as I knew it. Four years later, I can honestly say that my diagnosis of diabetes was not the end of my life—it was the beginning!"

Diabetes in children and youth is increasing at alarming rates. Type 1 diabetes, which requires insulin for survival and predominantly affects the young, is rising at a rate of 3% per year. The increase is twice as high among children of pre-school age. Type 2 diabetes is responsible for 90-95% of all diabetes cases. Once considered a disease of the elderly, type 2 diabetes is rising dramatically in children, adolescents and young adults. This cause for concern requires governments to promote opportunities for healthy diet and increased physical activity.

New global diabetes data are taken from the Diabetes Atlas third Edition, International Diabetes Federation 2006 (in press).

For further information, please contact Rachel Morgan, American Diabetes Association: rmorgan@diabetes.org; (703)549-1500 x2290.

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Note to Editors

The **American Diabetes Association** is the nation's leading voluntary health organization supporting diabetes research, information and advocacy. The Association's advocacy efforts include helping to combat discrimination against people with diabetes; advocating for the increase of federal funding for diabetes research and programs; and improved access to, and quality of, healthcare for people with diabetes. The Association's mission is to prevent and cure diabetes and to improve the lives of all people affected by diabetes. Founded in 1940, the Association provides services to hundreds of communities across the country. For more information, please call the American Diabetes Association at 1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383) or visit diabetes.org. Information from both these sources is available in English and Spanish.

The **International Diabetes Federation (IDF)** is an umbrella organization of over 190 member associations in more than 150 countries, representing millions of people with diabetes, their families, and their healthcare providers. The mission of the IDF is to promote diabetes care, prevention and a cure worldwide. It does this through education for people with diabetes and healthcare professionals, public awareness campaigns and the promotion of the free exchange of diabetes knowledge.

The '**Unite for Diabetes**' campaign is a global campaign to secure a United Nations Resolution on diabetes. The campaign is led by the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) and represents a coalition of diabetes associations, professional societies, charities, foundations and industry. Details of the campaign including advocacy materials, press kits and other resources are available on the www.unitefordiabetes.org website.

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