

a Great Type of Support:

Group Lends a Hand To Families Dealing with Diabetes

By EMILY GUEVARA
Staff Writer

Margie Boyd remembers how quickly her life changed when her son Jake, then 8, was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes.

Within a day, carbohydrates, insulin levels, and giving regular injections became necessities every time Jake ate.

“It is a radical lifestyle change,” Boyd says.

It was this experience and the work of learning how to cope with the disease that inspired Boyd and several other families affected by the disease to start an organization, the Tyler Type One Diabetes Foundation.

Tyler Type One exists to provide support and information to people and families affected by a recent diagnosis. From Facebook posts and daily phone calls to gift baskets and personal visits, the group provides a network for people affected by the disease.

Boyd said that she or other group members typically visit families within 24 to 48 hours of a diagnosis.

The organization has developed a partnership with Dr. Luis Casas, a pediatric endocrinologist, at Trinity Mother Frances Hospitals and Clinics so that he can refer new patients to the group.

Boyd said the influx of information that accompanies a new diagnosis can be overwhelming. The Type One members come by to offer emotional support. They provide baskets of snacks to treat sugar lows, but they stay away from offering medical advice, she said.



Photos by Kara Helm Photography

Sarah Wilson checks her 17-month-old daughter Faith's blood sugar levels.

In addition, the group meets once a month at a local church where a presentation is made about topics related to Type 1 diabetes. A Q&A session typically follows. Children living with diabetes are welcome to attend as well.

“The whole idea is to offer that undergirding support for the Type 1 community in this area,” Boyd says.

Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune

disease in which the body's immune system attacks and destroys the insulin-producing cells of the pancreas, according to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International website. It differs from Type 2 diabetes, which is a metabolic disorder in which a person's body produces insulin but cannot use it effectively, the website reads.

The body needs insulin, a hormone, to convert sugar, starches and other food into

