



Strength

On October 25, 2008, BDI hosted **A Celebration of Strength: The First Annual BDI Luncheon Honoring Women with Type 1 Diabetes**

at the Prado Restaurant in Balboa Park. Designed to "honor" women who balance diabetes care with family, work, and every-day challenges, this luncheon provided participants a chance to exchange stories and enjoy a wonderful meal with new friends.

Alexis Pollak was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes in childhood. She attended the first annual Celebration of Strength along with 50 other women with Type 1. She shares her memories from that day. (right)

Anyone who has ever been touched by Type 1 diabetes knows that it profoundly changes how one thinks about health and wellness. Women with Type 1 have unique concerns ranging from complex emotional challenges (how to juggle the demands of relationships, motherhood, work, home and diabetes) to the more practical, day-to-day issues which may be taken for granted by those without the disease. While A Celebration of Strength is designed to honor women from all walks of life who have Type 1 diabetes, the Behavioral Diabetes Institute encourages everyone with diabetes to embrace the motto "Honor Yourself".

Check the BDI website for periodic updates about the 2nd Annual Celebration of Strength Luncheon, slated for Fall of 2009, and learn how you can participate.

www.behavioraldiabetes.org



An Account by Alexis Pollak

If you have ever been to diabetes camp, then you know how incredible it feels to be around a group of people going through the exact same thing you are -- the injections, the carb-counting, the constant highs and low. They GET IT. It is so refreshing for people with diabetes to be around others who "get it," because it can be such an isolating disease.



Camp was wonderful when we were kids, but rather impractical now that I am an adult. So you can imagine how excited I was to attend a celebration in honor of women living with Type 1 diabetes. A Celebration? Of Strength? FOR ME? For having diabetes?! Sign me up!

I attended the first Celebration of Strength, a luncheon honoring women living with Type 1 diabetes, hosted by the Behavioral Diabetes Institute, and I can honestly say, I was blown away. Ladies from all walks of life, all ethnicities, all in various stages of their diabetes journey came together to celebrate the fact that we all do a full time job of diabetes management on top of our real full-time jobs. It was astounding to hear the individual stories from the women: some of them had been misdiagnosed and barely received care in their first years with diabetes, other struggled with insurance issues and a lack of advocacy in their schools or work; others discussed the challenges of depression, which often creeps along with a diabetes diagnosis. Many women shared stories of their "ah-ha" moments, and who and what they drew inspiration from. But no matter the peaks and valleys that women discussed that day, the inspiration came from the fact that we were all there, together, supporting one another, listening, laughing, crying, sharing, and not one of us had to be alone in our disease that day. Break out the glucose meters, wear those pumps proudly and carb count to your hearts content because everyone is right there with you.

Together, we inspired each other to keep up the fight against diabetes. We reminded each other that one bad day in the battle does not mean you have lost the war. We showed each other just how strong we really are. It was a long-overdue celebration, and I know I have the gift of the strength those women gave me to draw from every day. Truly a Celebration of Strength.

The First Annual Celebration of Strength luncheon was generously sponsored by Abbott and Smiths Medical.