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An Illness, a Bracelet, a New Hit

By **MARC SANTORA**

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Correction Appended

For Sydney Davis, breakfast comes with a blood test and an insulin dose. So do lunch, dinner and every snack in between. In fact, for as long as she can remember, every bite of food has come with a possible consequence.

Sydney, 12, of North Caldwell, N.J., who was found to have diabetes when she was in kindergarten, does not complain. But she is doing something about it.

Inspired by the wildly popular yellow wristbands promoted by Lance Armstrong to raise money for cancer research, Sydney thought, "Why not do something similar for diabetes research?"

With the help of her friend Daniel Rosen, 13, also a diabetes patient, and their parents, they ordered 10,000 blue wristbands that said simply: "Cure Diabetes Today."

After only four weeks, the silicone rubber bracelets have sold out at \$2 apiece, and 30,000 more are on order.


"We had no idea it would be this successful," said Leslie Davis,



Jennifer S. Altman for The New York Times

Sydney Davis, left, and Daniel Rosen of North Caldwell, N.J., with their bracelet, which reads, "Cure Diabetes Today." They have sold 10,000 of them.

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Sydney's mother. "I have children ringing my doorbell asking, 'Do you have the bracelets?'"

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It seems the yellow wristband is the new red AIDS ribbon and Sydney and Daniel have caught the wave, joining a growing list of people using a colored bracelet to help raise money for a cause.

"It is safe to say that right now, if there is a cause, there is a wristband for it," said Michelle Milford, a spokeswoman for the Lance Armstrong Foundation, which, along with Nike, created the original yellow "Livestrong" band in May. They are on track to sell 30 million by the end of the year at \$1 a band.



Fred R. Conrad/The New York Times

Two other bands, for the Lance Armstrong Foundation and breast cancer research.

Witnessing that smashing success, others have gotten into the act. Target started selling pink bracelets for breast cancer in October and averaged 10,000 sales a day, a company spokeswoman said. So far, the company has donated roughly \$600,000 to the Breast Cancer Research Foundation.

The One Earth Foundation, which promotes AIDS awareness, quickly sold out of the 10,000 red wristbands they started selling online in November, said Tracy Carr, the executive director for the foundation. "It is a reach one, teach one philosophy," she said, explaining why charities find the bands so appealing.

Even small outfits, like Cindy Waeltermann's AutismLink in Pittsburgh, which helps families with autistic children connect with other families, have had success with silicone rubber bracelets. Since she started selling blue bracelets marked with colorful puzzle pieces on her Web site several weeks ago, Ms. Waeltermann said, "I can't keep them in stock."

It is possible to find myriad outfits, not all legitimate, on the Internet selling bands in a rainbow of colors, claiming to sponsor everything from ovarian cancer research to melanoma awareness. (The Armstrong Foundation has actively gone after counterfeiters, Ms. Milford said, noting that the name "Livestrong" is trademarked.)

But unlike a large store that can use its vast resources to promote its efforts, and unlike the Lance Armstrong

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Foundation, which has benefited from celebrities and politicians sporting the band, Sydney and Daniel have relied only on word of mouth and their friends in North Caldwell.

Sherri Rosen, Daniel's mother, said that initially, the project was meant to be a small act of charity, to raise money for the clinic where their children are treated, the Naomi Berrie Diabetes Center at the Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center of New York-Presbyterian Hospital.

They got more than they bargained for. "The response has been amazing," she said.

In the United States there are 18.2 million people with diabetes, some 6 percent of the population, according to the American Diabetes Association. This year alone, an estimated 213,000 people will die of diabetes and its complications.

With so many people affected, perhaps it is not a surprise that the blue bands have caught on.

There are two kinds of diabetes, unrelated to each other.

Type 1 diabetes, also known as juvenile diabetes, has a genetic component and sometimes appears in multiple family members. But scientists do not know what sets off the disease in some people, although viruses are thought to be a factor. Both Daniel and Sydney suffer from this kind of diabetes.



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