

Megan Baird

### Type One Tragedy

My family and I were lounging on the old, leather, living room couch, happily watching television on the big screen TV, because life is short. Our family had a great life. Until one day, my sister, Belle, started to change. Over the course of a few months, I noticed my sister's clothes were quickly becoming too big for her, looking slimmer every time I saw her.

Later, I learned that she had lost 30 pounds. One day, Belle asked, "Why are you guys so tired? I am feeling pumped." At night, I kept waking up to the sound of a flushing toilet, multiple times each night. The beaming sun rose from underneath the hills, about a fortnight after the first time I had been woken up. I asked my mother, "Do you know who's been using the bathroom in the middle of the night?" My mom explained to me that she got disturbed in the night as well. Later, when the beautiful sky showed colors of red, orange, and pink, Belle told my mom that she was the one frequently getting up in the night to use the bathroom.

About a year goes by, these problems kept occurring. Belle's body became so thin and unrecognizable, and she constantly emptied the pantry. I could barely get a chance to taste my favorite, scrumptious snacks. At this point, my parents began getting worried. Being the hypochondriacs that my mom and I were, there was always a thought in our minds that Belle could have a lifelong disease. The chances of a little girl getting diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes is 1 in 100. At the time, her 11 year old body would be changing soon. As a result, my parents figured puberty caused this. My sister asked, "Can I get tested just in case, so I don't overthink things?" My mom didn't want to at first because COVID caused the hospitals to remain fully occupied. A few days later, she called and scheduled an appointment with our family medicine doctor because my mom kept worrying.

The day of Belle's appointment dreadfully approached. My sister got called down to the office to get checked out of school. She got her blood drawn at the doctor's office, so the doctors could evaluate it. Our entire family waited patiently for several days. The day was Wednesday, February 10, 2021. The bare trees stood there, silently, as the cool air blew off the rest of the crumpling leaves; we had an indoor religious-activity because of the winter weather. My sister's Young Women group made elves out of socks, decorating them with glitter, red and green colors, pom poms, and yarn. My little brother couldn't stay home alone, so I had to miss out on the fun activity.

The sound of the garage broke the silence of the quiet house, earlier than I should've heard it. They came in through the door, and I saw my mom and sister crying. My mom said while sobbing, "Your sister has Type One Diabetes, we are going to the hospital. I got a call while the girls were making sock elves, and I couldn't focus on the call because Becca, a special needs girl, hid somewhere in the church. The other leaders don't pay attention to the girls, so I was on the phone with terrible news, trying to find Becca." I felt like a dripping faucet waiting to be fixed; I started crying. I gave my sister the biggest hug I physically could, trying to somehow comprehend that our lives would now change forever. I didn't know if she would survive, it made me scared.

"Everything's going to be okay," my Dad clarified. My parents and Belle hurried to the car and headed to the hospital, staying for 3-4 days. We couldn't visit because COVID-19 hit its peak. The pandemic outbreak made the situation much worse. That night, my thoughts kept me tossing and turning all night. My body became exhausted, like the end of a battery's life. At the hospital, Belle's nurses taught her how to manage her blood sugar. She would eventually get a

pump, and a blood glucose monitor. Each day, Stockton, my brother, and I waited for the daily facetime call from our family.

My brother and I wanted to do something special for her before she arrived back home. We gathered decorations of all her favorite things, drawing cute pictures, and writing quotes to make her feel better. Over the next few days, we worked hard, enhancing the bland, plain space in my sister's room. On February 14th, my brother saw our red car driving up the hill. We jumped up and down with joy. She walked through the front door. Instantly, I could smell something new and different: insulin. It smelled very strange, but it saves my sister's life, so it suddenly became a good smell. My brother and I presented Belle's newly decorated room to her later that night; her mood changed from sad to happy. The sight of her beautiful smile after a traumatic event lit up my world.

Fast forward a year later, my family has learned so much. Many people don't know the difference between Type 1 and 2; they have no idea what it's like. Watching her blood sugar levels is vital. If we don't catch her low and high blood sugar moments in time, she can become very sick or even die. Insulin is her life support. If she doesn't have it, she will die.

Our neighbors and friends felt bad for Belle, but 90% of them don't really know and understand what it's like. Diabetics and their families have to sacrifice so much, just to live. People at school joke about Diabetes, and it's not cool; especially since kids and adults don't even have the correct knowledge on Type 1 and Type 2 Diabetes. I'm guessing families dealing with other diseases and tragic events are similar. It's definitely hard knowing she has to deal with it the rest of her life, but she's a tough girl. I love my sister with all my heart. She's so strong. Enjoy life with your loved ones. Life is short, you never know how much time you have with them.