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# *People and Living.* **WITH DIABETES.**

When we research diabetes, we look at the impact and outcomes of interventions. In doing that, we often define those outcomes by what a person or group of people living with diabetes has lost. For example, we might measure the number of hours of sleep a person has lost over the course of a year due to hypoglycemic or hyperglycemic glucose events, or we might look at how far a person's A1C is from normal, and assign that difference a value, essentially measuring their loss of normality.

Normality is an interesting thing, because “normal” does not mean the same thing to everyone. There is no standard for what is normal. Normality is a social construct, and by virtue of society defining it, it does not conform to a one-size-fits-all definition. However, one thing that everyone living with diabetes can agree on is that we know loss when it happens, and loss is never normal.

On Wednesday, June 5, 2019 the diabetes community lost a guiding light for what it means to live your best life, with diabetes, despite complications. Kimberly Hilsop, a friend and advocate for every person with diabetes that she encountered, passed away unexpectedly at the age of 37 due to complications related to living with type 1 diabetes. For those of us who knew her and were fortunate enough to call her a friend,

we have been forced to consider our own mortality, and learn to host an emptiness that Kim's presence left vacated. As much as she was loved within the diabetes community at large, I cannot imagine the loss that those closest to her must be feeling, and our hearts here at The PLAID Journal go out to everyone who is grieving Kim no longer being with us.

I met Kim seven years ago at a diabetes conference in southwest Florida. It was summer, it was hot, there were a few dozen of us all together as young adults (at the time) living with diabetes, and we stayed in dorms that had recently been vacated by undergraduate students finishing their first year of on-campus living. The facilities left a lot to be desired, but those few days with people living



with diabetes, my people, were filled with conversations and experiences that I will never forget, and that more than made up for any shortcomings in the facilities.

Kim is not the first person that we have lost to diabetes complications. Unfortunately, she will not be the last either. These losses leave scars far more significant than the needle and fingerprick marks that so many of us carry around. Kim was a gem. She looked for rainbows everywhere she went, and left just as many in her wake. From her candid comments about awful continuous glucose monitor (CGM) graphs, to being a loving wife and devoted friend, and all of the amazing things that made her an anchor in the diabetes community, both online and in real life, she will be forever missed.

Losing Kim hit me hard. I know that it hit a lot of us who knew her hard. I have seen the diabetes community grieve over the years, but this time it was different. Kim's name is on a board in my office of people to reach out to

as an author and contributor for The PLAID Journal. It will forever be our loss that we did not get the chance to feature her so that our readers, you, could gain from her unique and optimistic perspectives about the world and diabetes around us.

As you read this issue of The PLAID Journal, I hope you will think about what support you need to live your best life. I hope you will practice self-care behaviors that make your life better. I hope you find a community, be it a diabetes community or otherwise, that brings out the best in you and allows you to flourish. In the years that I knew Kim, she taught me that the most important part about people living with diabetes was never the "with diabetes" piece. It was always about the people, and it was always about living.

Even when you lose, don't lose the lesson.

Live well,  
--MARTIN



AND YET I SMILE.