

BUILDING INDEPENDENCE WITH DIABETES

We are excited to celebrate the camper career of Braeden Tapp, a camper who attended our very first INdependence Diabetes Camp in 2012 and every year since. He and his parents, Sean and Christy, share these thoughts about their camp experience.

The growth that we have seen from a little boy to a young man has been enhanced by Braeden's camp experience. After his first year, he learned how to set goals and prepare to achieve them. He showed that by passing the swim test and saving money to purchase a 'camp-like' bike to ride at home. We saw him taking more responsibility for making diabetic decisions without parental prompting. Now he's entirely independent in his diabetic management.

The most growth we saw was when Braeden left for 3 weeks to attend LIT and INdependence Camp. That took lots of prayer and trust on our part to allow him to camp without us at night, which can be the most dangerous time for a diabetic. We have learned diabetic experiences that will help us to feel comfortable letting Braeden leave for college and beyond.

I wouldn't be the person I am today without camp.



LEFT: Braeden in 2011 at Soldier Field receiving the first check from the Jay Cutler Foundation.

BELOW: Braeden this past summer enjoying arts and crafts like pottery.



"The most enjoyable part of camp is the opportunity to try new things on your own," Braeden said. He loved that others accepted that his favorite activity was arts and crafts, where he spent lots of time assisting during CIT (Counselor in Training) last summer.

"I'm glad for the opportunity to apply for the Service Corp Program this year. I've learned how to write a resumé, interview, and volunteer, which will help me when I apply for college,"

Braeden says.

He also thinks that every diabetic should try camp by themselves just to learn about the disease and to help their families adjust to letting them be more independent. Braeden's final thoughts were, "I want everyone to know that I wouldn't be the person I am today without camp."

Thanks to funds raised in the Annual Campaign, kids like Braeden can safely discover their independence.