

# My Diabetes Story...



## Kiara Paglia

### Safer on her school bus

Kerry Harrison of Bellingham, Washington can rest a little easier now when her daughter rides the school bus. Kiara, who is 11-years-old and has type 1 diabetes, recently faced an episode of low blood glucose while riding the bus. Although she keeps glucose tabs in her backpack, on that particular day, Kiara didn't have enough available. The bus driver pulled over and a fellow student gave Kiara a juice box to help. Kerry took this as a warning sign. It might happen again and she needed a plan to help her daughter in case it did.

### In January 2016 Kerry contacted the American Diabetes Association.

She wanted to ask the school district to keep a supply of glucose tabs or other fast-acting sugar source on its buses for similar situations. One of the Association's legal advocates explained that students with diabetes must be allowed to carry and access their own supplies while on school buses. But, she said that the law does not specifically require a school bus to carry its own supply of glucose tabs. So, if Kerry decided to make that request, she would be asking the school district to go above and beyond what the law requires.

### Kerry decided to push for more than the law required.

She was looking out for the best interests of her daughter, as well as other children who have diabetes. So, after she received information and guidance from the legal advocate, Kerry contacted the school district and made the request for the district's buses to carry those supplies. After considering her request, an assistant superintendent contacted Kerry with the answer that she wanted to hear.

- At the beginning of the school year, the school district would stock the first aid kit of each school bus with a supply of individual snacked-size skittles (candy). The candy would be supplied by parents.
- When a student needed them for medical reasons, the student's own supplies would be the first source. But, if required, the skittles in the first aid kit would be available as an alternative.
- During medical situations, the bus drivers would follow appropriate procedures to ensure the safety of all students on the bus.

### Kerry sent a note to the legal advocate.

"Good news. We won. Thank you for your help. If anyone else has the same issue, I am happy to share and help with the process." Through her advocacy Kerry proved that, with help from legal advocacy, you can win in real life, without having to win in court. Kerry also signed up as a Diabetes Advocate for the American Diabetes Association. As an advocate, she will take action and voice support for diabetes-related legislation, programs and funding.

The American Diabetes Association's *Safe at School*® Campaign Helps Children Who Have Diabetes



The American Diabetes Association leads the effort to prevent and eliminate discrimination against people who have diabetes at school, at work and in other parts of daily life.



Call 1-800-DIABETES (342-2383) or visit [diabetes.org/gethelp](http://diabetes.org/gethelp)