Vaughn Christian of Jacksonville, Florida loves summer camp.

Vaughn, who was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes in the fall of 2014, is like millions of others who attend camp each year. They love camp because it’s fun, helps build great relationships and offers learning and other experiences that are not available most anywhere else.

So, in the spring of 2015, when Vaughn’ mother, Kira, got a message from her son’s camp saying that he could not attend that summer, she was upset. She was told, “I’m sorry for the bad news. We are not equipped to handle a camper with diabetes.”

Kira has been a paralegal for years and, with her legal background, believed that Vaughn had rights that made this situation unfair. Kira could not bring herself to tell Vaughn that he couldn’t go to camp—especially that it was because of his diabetes. She knew that Vaughn would not handle the news very well.

Instead, she contacted the American Diabetes Association for help.

She wrote, “My son has been begging to go to camp this summer. Telling him he can’t go would severely affect his self-esteem. I want him to have a normal camp experience like other kids. Thank you for any legal advice you can provide to help my son.”

Kira spoke with a Legal Advocate at the Association and learned that Vaughn did have legal rights.

She was told that, under federal law, Vaughn should be allowed to attend camp. The Legal Advocate also shared helpful resources, such as a sample letter to mail to the camp, tips on how to speak with administrators and hints about negotiating on behalf of her son.

Supplied with this information, Kira was successful.

The camp reversed its policy, made changes to care for Vaughn’s diabetes and allowed him to attend. Kira never even told Vaughn what had happened. He just went to camp and had a great time. He had no medical problems at all; things went very well.

Having diabetes should never have been an issue in the first place.

“I am so thankful for the American Diabetes Association. I have volunteered to get involved and help others who may not know where to turn when their child is being unjustly discriminated against.”

Kira, Vaughn’s Mom

The American Diabetes Association’s Safe at School Campaign Helps Children Who Have Diabetes

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