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## Diabetes camp caters to children

### Families join in day of fun, education at event promoting awareness of disease

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Imagine being the only one at school who needs a bathroom break.

Make that an insulin shot, and you start to see why it's such a relief for diabetic children to play together, said Kaisha Rains, 19, who organized Saturday's family day camp promoting diabetes awareness at the California Living Museum.

Once a camper, Rains now runs several local day camps in partnership with the Diabetes Society of Santa Clara Valley and other sponsors. "It's sometimes hard," said Rains of being diabetic. "You have to constantly know your body. We have to watch constantly what we eat. My dad would come (to school) to give me a shot on his lunch break." Going to camp was the first time she met other children with the disease, she said.

"You have fun here," said Lexi Franey, an 11-year-old camper. Franey and the dozens of other campers look like healthy, thriving children, and in many ways they are. But to stay that way they have to test their blood sugar throughout the day. They take three to six insulin shots, or they wear a small pager-like device known as an "insulin pump" that sends insulin into the bloodstream with the push of a button.

On Saturday, campers made crafts and watched live animal shows while their parents learned about how to manage the disease.

"The child deals with it on a personal level, but it's a family disease," said Tony Franey, Lexi's dad, who became president of the local Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation after Lexi was diagnosed. Not only do parents have to learn the physiological and technical aspects of the disease, he said, but they also have to help their children cope with a new lifestyle. And their siblings have to adjust their behavior, Franey said. He knows his other children should be able to have a candy bar once in a while, but it's difficult when Lexi can't. "We're not trying to make closet chocoholics out of them," he said of his non-diabetic children. But Lexi is a "slave to a regimen." Franey found help and hope for a cure through the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, who's Web site is [www.jdrf-bakersfield.org](http://www.jdrf-bakersfield.org).