



In Memoriam

Andrej Darwin

1989 – 2014

Unlike most of the stories you'll read in these pages, my story here isn't entirely inspiring. It's mostly sad. But by the end of it, I'd like for you to at least have some glimmer of hope.

I joined the Centre in 2011, inspired by the chance to help people understand and take part in their own care by developing new technology.

In part I was drawn to healthcare because my wonderful son Andrej was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes (T1D) at age four. He took it in stride, growing up, going to school, and moving away to university with the added chore of reading his blood sugar four times a day, and injecting insulin each time. Before Dr. Frederick Banting and his colleagues at U of T found a way to extract insulin and administer it to patients, every child who developed T1D would inexorably die within a year or two of diagnosis. I tell people that before Banting, T1D was a death sentence, and since then, it has been a life sentence: a life of measuring and injecting.

But just as he went off to look for employment, he (like all of us) was hit with the financial downturn of 2008. Andrej wound up volunteering with the St. John's Ambulance and just being a good listener to his many friends. As technology became available to help manage diabetes, he rejected it, choosing the devil he knew over the devil he didn't.

Unfortunately, in June of 2014, something went very wrong with Andrej's diabetes. He apparently had a severe low blood sugar, and as he was living on his own, there was nobody to notice that he was unconscious and call 911. His life slipped away while he laid there. His body was found a few days later.

We will always be grateful to the many friends and colleagues - particularly many at the Centre - who reached out and supported us during those difficult times.

Unhappily, I've since decided to leave the wonderful team at the Centre, because there will always be too many reminders here, and because there are opportunities elsewhere presented at an opportune time.

The happy ending for the world is that I have no doubt that the Centre will go on helping people manage and participate in their own care.

Ian Darwin

Father of Andrej, Software developer, and Centre member