



KIDS RACE AGAINST CANCER, DIABETES

BY CATIE CASE

A new study conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation shows that young Americans are spending an average of 7.5 hours a day on entertainment media such as cell phones, computers and TVs. While this trend might be the norm, it is certainly not telling of all children, especially not IronKids.

Take Winter Vinecki, for example, who recently formed Team Winter, an official IronKids charity partner. Vinecki, only 11 years old, began her philanthropic journey several years ago with the idea that kids can make a difference if they put their minds to it. Vinecki began competing in running and triathlon events to increase awareness of childhood obesity.

In 2008, she shifted her charitable focus to prostate cancer when her father was diagnosed

with the disease. Her father passed away in early 2009, but Vinecki channeled the sadness she felt into motivation, collecting approximately \$150,000 for the cause last year alone. She plans to expand Team Winter this year, teaming up with IronKids as a national spokesperson.

"IronKids takes me across the U.S. and introduces me to other families and kids who might become inspired to help make a difference in this world," she says. "IronKids inspires kids to become active and live a healthier lifestyle, and I encourage them to go one step beyond that and race for a cause, like I do."

Additionally, IronKids will support the Iron Andy Foundation (IAF) by encouraging participants and their families to take part in the Iron Andy Challenge (IAC). The IAC seeks to provide children who have diabetes with camp scholarships and empower everyone with diabetes to take a proactive approach toward managing and fighting the disease. IAC "camperships" are awarded to children who demonstrate the ability and desire to meet three criteria: embrace physical fitness challenges; give back to the diabetes community by participating and fundraising for diabetes education and

awareness; and serve as a diabetes advocate and role model.

The partnership between IronKids and the IAF will also allow children without diabetes to meet an alternate set of criteria and award a campership to a child with diabetes.

"As the number of children developing Type 2 diabetes at a young age continues to grow, we feel it is imperative to raise awareness of the disease, which is linked to obesity," says Michelle Payette, director of IronKids.

Whether choosing to support an IronKids charity or fundraising independently, the youth of the sport are on their way to do a lot more than cross a finish line. ▽

To learn more about IronKids or to get involved with Team Winter or the Iron Andy Foundation, visit IronKids.com.