

# caris lauritsen and mary shepherd held a summer camp for girls with type 1 diabetes

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Content provided by residents **Caris Lauritsen** and **Mary Shepherd**;  
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Having type 1 diabetes as a child is no fun. Continually keeping tabs on your blood sugar, calculating carbs, and making sure that you are in a normal range is a lot for anyone, much less a child or a teenager.

Memorial High School juniors Caris Lauritsen (16) and Mary Shepherd (16), both type 1 diabetics, held a week-long summer camp June 6-9 for type 1 diabetic girls. They also hosted the moms and daughters on June 10 for a day of swimming and lunch. Caris' mother, Freyja Lauritsen, was proud of their efforts. "Mary and Caris are such great role models with this disease; they worked so hard to show each girl life is good despite type 1, and you're not alone," Freyja said.



Fun and laughter



Together!

Caris resides in Piney Point Village and Mary in Hunter's Creek. Both girls understand the challenges of type 1. Caris was diagnosed at the age of 1, and Mary at age 11.

"Having type 1 diabetes means that you have to mature faster than you want to. You have to deal with something upsetting when you're a kid," comments Mary. At the time, she didn't have a pump and relied on multiple daily finger pricks to determine insulin doses.

"I was diagnosed at 15 months old," says Caris. "I've never known anything different. It's all I've ever known, but each day is getting easier and easier with technology, which is encouraging."

Often overlooked with type 1 diabetes is the mental toll it takes on those who manage it 24/7. This lifelong metabolic disease requires constant vigilance, and many argue that social and emotional well-being is just as important as good blood sugar management.

"Caris knows that mental health is a huge component of type 1," explains Freyja. "It's critical that type 1 kids don't feel alone or isolated. Staying positive is what helps you tackle this disease every day. And little girls with diabetes really need older girls to encourage them and be examples."

## The Mary Caris Camp

Both Caris and Mary babysit for some children with type 1. Through their babysitting, they realized the need that younger ones had to connect with others their age who were dealing with the same disease and situations they were. They both decided to make a difference. As Caris says, "Some of them have never had a type 1 friend ever."

"I think what really prompted the camp for me was seeing how I could tailor something so simple to be special