



WHAT WOULD I BE WITHOUT DIABETES?

Marco Aizawa ponders the question a friend once posed to him. This is his reply.

I have had diabetes for 16 years. What would life be without it?

I would not have learnt so much about diabetes through Diabetic Society of Singapore, through educational talks and support groups, and learning with the members at Touch Diabetes Support.

I would not have been able to take part in the various Project Discovery organised by Touch Diabetes Support. I would not have climbed Mount Kinabalu twice or cycled to Kuantan and Cherating, or completed a hike in Singapore.

I would not have participated in the recent Project Discovery 7 from 9 to 14 June 2011. It was a project with a difference. Past Project Discovery have often been about physical endurance. This one was about community.

There were three different groups from the Singapore team – Nutrition and Calorie Counting,

Exercise and Risk Testing. I was involved in the exercise group. We liased with YMCA Shanghai and 20 of us, 11 of whom have diabetes, joined hands with 25 volunteers from China as well as Roche Shanghai to educate the public on diet and diabetes. We also performed risk tests for the public, and educated the volunteers to equip them with the right skills to raise diabetes awareness in Shanghai.

With the help of the Shanghai volunteers, an interesting mix of energetic and enthusiastic youth and sporty and outspoken elderly folks, we combed the streets, houses and shops in Shanghai to do the risk tests and also to share about diabetes with the community.

Besides being on the move, we used the Shimen Community and Cultural Centre to hold an exhibition on diet and eating well with diabetes, calorie counting and the importance of exercise with diabetes. Many people who

were at the Cultural Centre also had their blood sugars tested with the service kindly provided by Roche Shanghai.

I felt really good about this experience and the impact we made through interacting with the people in Shanghai and through the posters and brochures we had prepared. We left those behind to be put to good use and for the volunteers we trained to continue the good work.

Diabetes to me has been more of a blessing than a curse. I have much to be thankful for, for the friends I have made, for the opportunities I have been given to push myself physically, and the countless occasions I have been able to help others in the same situation and to share my life experiences to motivate them to learn, improve and grow.

What would life be without diabetes? Totally unimaginable.



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