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Wednesday, May 12, 2004

Mom turning into an 'ironman' to raise awareness for diabetes

For two years Stephanie Laborie has been putting herself through a tough, demanding training schedule in preparation for an ironman triathlon. It has disrupted her daily routine, called for carefully monitored diet and tested her perseverance.

For Laborie, she knows there is an end in sight—the finish line at Ironman USA Coeur d'Alene Triathlon in Idaho at the end of June. Her 14-year-old daughter Mandy has faced similar challenges but unlike her mom, Mandy has had no choice since being diagnosed with juvenile diabetes.

Laborie wants to help bring the finish line in sight for Mandy and the more than 200,000 Canadians who suffer from the disease, which occurs when the pancreas no longer produces

insulin, leaving the body unable to use blood sugar for energy. If not treated properly, it can lead to heart disease, kidney disease, eye disease, nerve damage and circulation damage.

"It's something that people don't see it, so they don't understand," Laborie said. "Particularly for teenagers, it is a struggle."

Laborie is hoping to raise between \$8,000 and \$10,000 for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation.

Laborie first started thinking about competing in an ironman when her husband Rob, who will also compete in Idaho, completed the Lake Placid Ironman Triathlon.

"Seeing athletes of all sizes, shapes and ability competing, I got caught up in it," she said. "And I thought it would be a great way to raise awareness."

In preparation for the 3.8 km swim, 180 km bike ride and 42.2 km run, Laborie has been training 10-18 hours a week, getting up for 6 a.m. swims and then riding and running after work. She has competed in some smaller triathlons to build her endurance and confidence.

She also just returned from Claremont, Fla. where she did some intensive workouts at the U.S. national training facility. Her commitment has won over her three daughters.

"At first they thought I was pretty crazy," Laborie said. "But the past week has shown them a lot. They've been pretty supportive all the way. My eldest daughter has helped with grocery shopping and picking up the other girls. The weekends have been hectic and they've all been definitely helping out."

Mandy's daily routine has not been easy since being diagnosed six years ago. She must have insulin injections four times a day and test her blood/glucose levels five to seven times a day. She must be very careful about what she eats to make sure those blood/glucose levels don't get too high or too low. Through all of it, Mandy has remained active, playing rep soccer and riding horses.

Laborie hopes to see the day where her daughter no longer requires insulin injections and says the challenge of the ironman "pales in comparison to the 24 hour a day, 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year, year after year challenge that Amanda (Mandy) and others with diabetes have to contend with."

Anyone wishing to donate to Laborie's cause can do so by logging on to www.diabetes.ca. Select on-line donations, pledge a Team Diabetes Participant and type Stephanie Laborie, Ironman 2004.

—By Herb Garbutt, staff writer



Stephanie Laborie has been training for two years in an effort to get in shape to compete in an Ironman competition this June in Idaho. In conjunction with the event, she is also trying to raise money for juvenile diabetes, a disease her daughter Mandy suffers from.

Photo by Ted Brown

Getting a-head



Acton's Melissa Bigg out-leaps Bishop Reding's Maura Fazio to head the ball in Thursday's Halton senior girls soccer game. Lindsey Atkinson and Amy Boileau scored as Acton edged Bishop Reding 2-1 to remain undefeated in four games.

Photo by Herb Garbutt

Hawks tourney washed out

The Halton Hills Hawks never got a chance to soar on the weekend.

Two days of rain washed out the Hawks' annual softball tournament. Fifty teams were to take part in the three-day event. However, Saturday's games were cancelled due to rain.

A revised schedule was drawn up to get games in on Sunday but the weather again didn't co-operate.



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