

# Step Up to Fight Diabetes

To help fight America's fastest-growing disease, the American Diabetes Association (ADA) is launching a new fund-raising event on October 20, 2007: Step Up To Fight Diabetes. Step Up to Fight Diabetes is a fund-raising walk unlike any other. During the event, participants are challenged to walk a ten mile course and to climb the historical staircases they pass along the way, from the 152 steps at City Hall to the sixty five steps at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Participants will train, fund raise and take one thousand steps towards a cure during the course of the event. Step Up strives to raise awareness and more than \$1 million to benefit the research, education, and advocacy efforts of the ADA. To participate, each individual will raise a minimum of \$1,000.

Step Up to Fight Diabetes appeals to many types of participants from those looking for a new physical challenge, to a way to help in the fight against diabetes, or even just to learn something new about the history of Philadelphia.

Each day approximately 4,110 people are diagnosed with diabetes, and 613 people die from the disease, making it the fifth leading cause of death in the United States. If current trends continue, one out of every three Americans, and one in two minorities, will develop diabetes in their lifetime.

While not all types of diabetes are preventable, the lives of those with the disease can be improved. Step Up to Fight Diabetes raises money to help improve those lives and to help search for a cure. Some people will participate in Step Up to Fight Diabetes for the physical challenge, while others participate to help save lives, including their own.

Two years ago, Liz Smith, now twenty eight, of Abington, PA, was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. Type 1 accounts for 5-10% of diagnosed cases of diabetes and is not preventable. Liz had no family history of diabetes. "When I was diagnosed with diabetes, I was devastated," said Smith. "However, I refuse to let my dia-

betes stop me from doing anything in life, including walking ten miles and one hundred flights of stairs. I will also use the months leading up to the event to concentrate on training, which means increasing my physical activity, and continuing to eat right."

Smith was diagnosed when she took a simple blood test for a life insurance policy. When her blood work came back, she was surprised to learn she had diabetes. Smith realizes she is lucky to have access to her many resources- including nutri-

tionists, educators and doctors- and realizes that many others with the disease are not as fortunate. By participating in Step Up, she hopes to help all those with diabetes improve their lives and receive the education she was able to get through her insurance.

"I am looking forward to the Step Up event because it will give me a chance to prove not only to others, but most importantly to myself, that diabetes doesn't have to stop you from doing anything, and can actually provide inspiration to



push yourself to achieve things you didn't think were possible," she said. In addition to participating in Step Up as a "Climber," (an individual who walks/climbs the course), individuals can sign up to be a Step Up Volunteer (an SUV: individuals who support the climbers every step of the way).

SUV, Adam Gladsden, changed his lifestyle when he was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes at age thirty one. Adam, now thirty three, has always followed a regular exercise regime. However, two years ago Adam started to experience an extreme weight loss despite following his efforts to maintain a healthy weight. Soon he became weaker and developed an unquenchable thirst. Eventually, he was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. "Although some people in my family have type 2 diabetes, I never thought that at my age, with a healthy lifestyle, that I could develop type 1," Adam said, "Nor did I realize the other complications diabetes can lead to if not properly cared for."

As Adam said, diabetes is more than just a disease itself. Diabetes can lead to a wide range of health complications, such as heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, blindness, kidney disease, dental disease, nervous system disease, complications of pregnancy and more. Through Step Up to Fight Diabetes, the ADA seeks to educate the public on these facts while challenging individuals to complete the ten mile course.

There are many opportunities to get involved with the Step Up campaign. For example: participate as a "climber," (like Liz);

register as an SUV (like Adam); donate to a participant; become a pre-event volunteer, lead training walks, help with recruitment efforts or support local office projects.

Staircases climbed during Step Up to Fight Diabetes include: the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Independence National Historic Park, the Free Library, Monument Plaza, Liberty Place, SEPTA Broad Street Line, SEPTA Broad Street Line (a second set of steps), Temple University's Liacouras Center, the Schuylkill River Path and Philadelphia City Hall.

When an individual or team signs up for Step Up to Fight Diabetes, a professionally-trained staff will be available to help with training and fund-raising tips; visit [www.diabetes.org/stepup](http://www.diabetes.org/stepup) for more information. You can also visit this website to learn more about the historic steps throughout Philadelphia, or to nominate a city staircase for a future event.

With approximately twenty one million Americans currently battling diabetes, and fifty four million adults and children in the U.S. are on the verge of being diagnosed with diabetes, this disease is truly an emergency. Take the stairs.

*Call 610-828-5003 or visit [diabetes.org/STEPUP](http://diabetes.org/STEPUP) to register for or to find more information about Step Up to Fight Diabetes*