

PARTING WORDS

COMMUTE *FOR A CURE*

Glencoe's Tom Seftenberg raises money for Type 1 Diabetes by taking the long way home.

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It started a little over six years ago as Tom Seftenberg was driving home from his office at Driehaus Capital Management to his home in Glencoe, a 19-mile commute. Just after Lakeshore Drive curved into Sheridan Road, he passed Loyola University and continued on through Rogers Park and his mind wandered. "I drive past here every day but have never seen what's along the lake." This sparked his idea to commute home from work on foot to raise money in support of Type 1 Diabetes research.

His sixth annual run home, an event Seftenberg calls Commute for a Cure, is in September. In the previous five years, he has raised more than \$150,000 for JDRF (formerly known as the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation). He is on their board and the impetus to actively support the organization is personal. It stems from his wife's own Type 1 Diabetes.

"My wife Lee was diagnosed 20 years ago as a young adult," he says. "She is healthy, but like any chronic illness, there are ups and downs. She handles it quietly and with grace."

He has no specific goal each year beyond increasing his fundraising total and making it home safely. He leaves his office mid-day and reaches his driveway around five o'clock, where he's greeted by neighbors, friends, and family.

"I am not an endurance athlete," he says. He runs approximately 2 1/2 miles every day, though as his commute date approaches, he works up to running eight or 10 miles. His goal is to run the entire way. Last year, he achieved a personal best of running the first 17 miles.

The first year he did not take a phone, and had only a few dollars. "I was stopping at every drinking fountain and popping into a Chipotle, or something," he laughs.

Now, he is better prepared with energy bars and a water bottle. He stops, looks at the view, checks email, eats a protein bar, and re-hydrates. At about the halfway point, Lee meets him

with Gatorade and at Plaza Del Lago, in Wilmette, he meets up with one of several friends "to get me home," he says, "to be my wing man."

Through his volunteer work with JDRF, his interest and concern about diabetes has increased. "The annual cost of diabetes in the United States in 2012 was over \$322 billion. That's roughly \$1,000 per U.S. resident," he says. Diabetes also accounts for one in three Medicare dollars spent, and the number of people with diabetes is expected to double, to almost 60,000,000 people by 2040.

In addition to becoming more aware of diabetes and its personal, and societal, costs,

"I have learned that people are incredibly generous and supportive," he says. "Whether you have a personal connection or not, diabetes is something that everyone should care about."

While his annual run is still a solo endeavor, he would like to see it become more widespread in terms of other people doing their own runs, at whatever time of the year and at whatever distance they are comfortable with. The JDRF website includes an easily replicated "template" for people who want to create an individual fundraising event, such as Seftenberg's run.

"I want to continue to contribute to this cause that I feel is important," he says. "But I want to make this a bigger JDRF-sponsored event. I want to recruit others to do it, on their own, and really use it as a tool to build awareness and support."

So while he is not necessarily trying to beat his time or raise a specified amount of money, "I am intent on enjoying it and getting home and having pizza and a beer. There is nothing better than being outside raising money for a cause and the woman I love, and finishing it off by celebrating the generosity of our neighbors, colleagues, family, and friends."

To learn more, visit jdrf.org or to support Seftenberg's Commute for a Cure, visit www2.jdrf.org/goto/Seftenberg2016

