

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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AS DIABETES ALERT DAY APPROACHES A CENTRAL OHIO DIABETIC TELLS HER STORY OF OUTREACH TO THE PEOPLE OF BELIZE

(Columbus, OH) – Ellen Hayes has been a Type 1 diabetic since she was eleven years old and knows all too well about insulin injections and continuous glucose monitoring. However, Ellen has not let diabetes slow her down.

An avid cyclist and a member of the American Diabetes Association’s Central Ohio Tour de Cure Planning Committee, Ellen spent several weeks during the month of February in Belize on a mission trip hoping to make a difference. And what a difference she and her fellow mission mates made.

Not only was Ellen there to fulfill the same objectives as the other members of her trip – to help build and shape the communities of Belize both in a personal and physical way – she also had a personal mission. To help spread awareness of diabetes.

Armed with glucose meters and test strips donated by Abbott Labs and Roche Biomedical, red “American Diabetes Association” bracelets, and her close personal knowledge of the disease, Ellen helped test the blood sugar levels of nearly 50 Belizeans in the villages of San Narciso and San Victor.

“We gave each person tested an American Diabetes Association red bracelet so medical teams could identify them as diabetic,” said Hayes. “And I recorded their blood sugar levels on a pink post-it note so they could show it to the doctor at the clinic that came through the village the next week.”

Being in another country and trying to provide medical awareness proved to be a challenge. Sleeping in a hammock in a Mayan hut, waking to the sounds of crowing roosters, avoiding packs of fighting dogs and pigs, and nightly mosquito onslaughts only added to the challenge, but for Ellen the trip was a monumental success.

“Overall, the diabetes testing, education, and training in the use of the donated glucose meters for those who needed it was by far the most rewarding part for me,” Hayes said. “By week’s end, the people’s thankfulness and appreciation for helping them with their diabetes told me I had indeed made that difference.”

(Ellen Hayes is available for interviews and can be reached at ellen@goellen.net or 614-209-7922. More information on the mission trip can be found at www.missiontobelize.org.)

The American Diabetes Association’s Diabetes Alert Day is a one-day, “wake-up” call to inform the American public about the seriousness of diabetes, particularly when diabetes is left undiagnosed or untreated. Held on the fourth Tuesday of every March the 20th annual American Diabetes Alert Day is scheduled for Tuesday, March 25, 2008.

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The Association gratefully accepts gifts through your will.

The Mission of the American Diabetes Association is to prevent and cure diabetes and to improve the lives of all people affected by diabetes.