CDE Stories: Giving a Deeper Meaning to the Ice Bucket Challenge

The ALS Ice Bucket Challenge went viral this summer, drawing the attention and participation of athletes, celebrities and politicians. As the videos of friends dumping ice water on their heads populated our Facebook newsfeeds, some have taken the opportunity to remind the public what this social media phenomenon is all about—bringing awareness to Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), more commonly known as “Lou Gehrig’s Disease.”

At NCBDE, we see the amazing work our Certified Diabetes Educators® (CDEs) do for the individuals they work with on a daily basis. We love to hear your stories! It was during a casual conversation with Carol Laws-Krause, RN, CDE at the recent AADE meeting, and a follow-up conversation with Nancy Rhodes, RN, MA, CDE, Past President of the Garden State Association of Diabetes Educators, where a story gave the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge a deeper, more personal meaning for our organization and community of CDEs.

Nancy shared the story of Michael Rasmussen, a CDE working in New Jersey who sadly lost his battle with ALS in 2009. Michael was a fellow nurse and CDE who served on the GSADE board with Nancy from 2005 – 2007. His dedication and devotion to his colleagues and patients was the hallmark of his professional reputation. In fact, his family often vacationed in conjunction with the national AADE meetings so he could attend. His creative approach to education inspired his patients and his peers. In 2009, he received the “Educator of the Year” award from GSADE. The award highlighted his patience, tireless commitment and exceptional knowledge.

After Mike eventually succumbed to ALS, leaving a loving family and network of peers behind, Nancy felt strongly that his memory and his commitment should be honored and preserved in some way.

“I so appreciate holding the CDE credential, and I know Mike did as well, so we felt creating a scholarship to allow others to earn it was something Mike would appreciate and support,” Nancy, who was among the first CDE exam takers in 1986, said.

She worked with other GSADE members to create the Michael F. Rasmussen Memorial Scholarship Award, open to any diabetes educator interested in pursuing their initial CDE credential. In 2013, GSADE awarded the first two $600 memorial scholarships in Mike’s name, with his family in attendance for the momentous occasion. “It was a touching moment for his family, his closest friends and his GSADE colleagues who all rose to honor this incredible person,” Nancy added.

GSADE awarded two recipients this past May at the 2014 Annual Meeting, and it is their hope to continue to do so.
It is stories like this one where we are reminded of the dedicated, commitment and passionate individuals who are our colleagues and friends.