

Diabetes-Alert Dogs Make a Difference

The dogs of the Diabetes Friendly Foundation's "K-9 for Kids" program mean the world to their handlers.

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Deanna Whitehead and her diabetes-alert dog, JDDogs, long used by law enforcement and the military to sniff out drugs and bombs, are being trained to detect high and low blood sugar levels in their handlers.

"With a diabetes-alert dog, some of the strain and fear of the dangerous side effects of diabetes is lifted," says Cole Egger, founder of the Diabetes Friendly Foundation. The organization's "K-9 for Kids" program pairs diabetes-alert dogs with children suffering from the disease.

"We are placing three dogs this year," says Egger, who notes it costs anywhere from \$3,000 to \$15,000 to train one dog. "Our goal for next year would be to place 10-plus dogs with families."

Deanna Whitehead, a teenager with Type-1 diabetes, adores her diabetes-alert dog, JD.

"Without JD, I was afraid to do a lot of things but he has given me the confidence to live my life now and to not be afraid anymore," she says. "I trust him to take care of me and it's an awesome feeling."

DFF is hosting its first-ever K-9 for Kids fundraiser on Nov. 13 in Dallas. For more information, visit www.diabetesfriendly.org