

# Yada Yada: November 2011

## The Seed Award Special Edition



### Support, Information and a Voice for the Type 1 Community

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#### Greetings!

It is World Diabetes Day today, and to celebrate we are announcing the winner of the Type 1 Diabetes Network's (T1DN) annual [Seed Award](#). This is the second year we've issued this special award.

*And the winner is?* Helen Edwards! An amazing woman who lets nothing get in the way of her helping those who have type 1. Read more about her extraordinary story below.



world diabetes day

14 November

#### Meet Helen Edwards: The 2011 Seed Award Winner!



The word 'passionate' is an understatement when it comes to describing Helen Edwards, and what she does for the Type 1 community.

Helen is unique. Not only is she a qualified social worker who works in mental health, but she is also a diabetes counsellor, providing free online diabetes counselling as well as many other diabetes support programs. She also happens to have type 1.

"In 1979, when I was 12 years old, I was diagnosed with type 1 but I didn't want to be associated with diabetes in anyway at all", Helen says. "By the time I was in my early twenties, I felt settled with it, and by 30, I started to look for other people with type 1. I couldn't find anything except for the Type 1 Diabetes Network", she recalls.

As a result, Helen decided she needed to start something herself. "It was the time the internet started to emerge, and I thought it would be a great way to reach a large group of people." So in February 2002, Helen left her job to launch [Diabetes Counselling Online](#) (DCO), and has never looked back.

At first, Helen had no funding, resourcing DCO with her own money. She also worked hard at establishing herself in the diabetes world, including undertaking the approved diabetes educator course at Flinders University in South Australia six years ago.



Between 2004 and 2009, DCO received some funding from Diabetes Australia, through NDSS, to become a self-sufficient not-for-profit organisation. Now, DCO mostly survives through grants, although Helen does need to dip into her pockets to continue her work. Besides Helen, no one else in Australia is providing online counselling for people with diabetes. That's why she feels so passionate about continuing the work that she does.

Of the people she counsels, 50-60% have type 1 diabetes. Helen says the best thing about what she does is that she feels "rewarded each time a person says 'thank you, that's really made a difference to my life'". Because she has the insider knowledge, she feels she offers something extra by being able to connect to the person. In fact, that's the other aspect she enjoys: "connecting with other type 1-ers, and relating the same experiences with them".

One of the main issues for Helen has been the minimal funding. "I'd like to be able to pay my counsellors and myself a reasonable income. The biggest frustration is not being able to respond to people quickly because I don't have enough resources to employ more counsellors." But this hasn't stopped Helen from initiating new projects. She has started to provide face-to-face [health counselling](#) (to help fund her diabetes work), [diabetes wellbeing retreats](#), [diabetes & pregnancy pamper day spas](#), and an [online information service](#) for parents who have diabetes themselves.



Because her work is mainly online, Helen says, "my life does revolve around the computer". But she does take time out for herself. "Spending time with the family, pottering around with the kids, music, painting, art", are the other things Helen enjoys when she's not working.

On winning the Seed award - Helen is chuffed, and so excited! She has won other awards, but says, "The Seed award is the best because it's a recognition by peers and people living with type 1, otherwise you'll never find out what impact you're making."

"Life is short," she continues, "you gotta love life by doing things for other people."

Helen is truly a special individual in the type 1 community, and we'd like to congratulate her on winning the 2011 Seed award. Well done, Helen!

\*\*\*\*\*Sponsored Announcement\*\*\*\*\*



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## About the Seed Award

The Seed Award has been instigated by the Type 1 Diabetes Network in recognition of the critical role that Melinda Seed played in the development of the T1DN over many years. The award recognises people who have shown the strong values and commitment that Melinda has been contributing to the Type 1 community for many years.

Melinda volunteered her time, passion and expertise towards providing support, information and a voice for the Type 1 community for 10 years. Melinda was a founding director of the Type 1 Diabetes Network, as well as its first Treasurer and a long-standing moderator of the Reality Check online community. Melinda recently stepped down from her formal roles to pursue other interests.

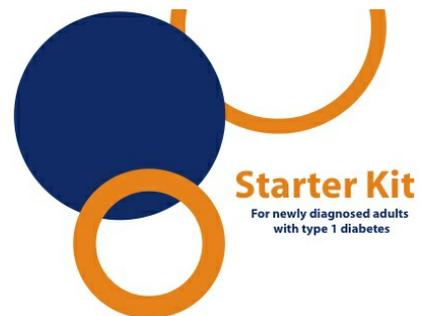
The Seed Award commenced in 2010 and will be awarded annually to people who have:

- Provided support, information and/or a voice for the Type 1 community.
- Demonstrated initiative and intelligence in their endeavours.
- Been committed to the principle that people living with Type 1 diabetes can and should have a voice in the decisions that affect our lives.

## Attention health professionals: do you need Starter Kits before Christmas?

If so, please place your order with Colleen ([colleen@d1.org.au](mailto:colleen@d1.org.au)) before 25 November.

For any orders placed after this date, you will need to be available to accept delivery after 28 December. Otherwise, place your orders in January for a late January delivery.



I hope you enjoyed this special Seed Award issue of Yada Yada. As usual, if you have any suggestions, just reply to this email.

All the best!

***From everyone at  
The Type 1 Diabetes Network***

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