



## Unite to help and educate

**Laura Cavanagh** gives her personal views on the Youth sessions at the IDF WPR Congress in Wellington.

To be invited to attend the Congress as an Australian Youth Delegate was an enormous honour which was very rewarding and eye-opening.

I was particularly excited as I share the vision of Diabetes Australia of turning diabetes around through awareness, prevention, detection, management and a cure.

In learning about the other Youth delegates it became apparent that many had the same vision as me. We all saw a definite lack of awareness within our communities – both local and global - and recognised the opportunity to educate others about diabetes.

We also noticed our own individual needs to unite for personal and collective strength in order to help ourselves and others to deal with the daily trials of living with and managing diabetes.

Furthermore, on a wider and more shocking scale, we heard of the outrageous state of the health system in countries like the Philippines and their complete lack of governmental assistance.

We all knew these gaps needed to be filled so, firstly, in order to promote a greater local awareness, we thought that the teachers in our schools needed to be educated properly on diabetes to ensure the right level of care is given to both primary and secondary school children.

On a global level, World Diabetes Day needs to be recognised and celebrated more widely to promote understanding and positive action.

To fulfil our personal needs to unite in strength so that we may collectively inspire, motivate and support ourselves we saw an opportunity to open diabetes networks on the World Wide Web by beginning a Facebook style system, thereby connecting everyone who wants to be involved.

We also saw the need for a 'one-stop shop' for all diabetes questions and definitive answers which would be effectively accessed as a website that is maintained by diabetes specialists and nurse educators.

Finally we need to concentrate our energies on ensuring that the future of fellow diabetics is safe, no matter where they come from. Though this is definitely a complex goal to achieve, it is not unrealistic. Insulin, medications and testing tools need to be equally attainable and cheaper for everyone.

It is easy to become discouraged by the enormity of the tasks ahead in order to close these gaps in diabetes and although everyone can sometimes feel too small to make a difference – just remember the last time you were in bed with a mosquito. ●



Above: New Zealand Youth delegates, from left Hayden Vink, Ally Avery and Joshua Notman in a relaxed mood at the welcome to Congress gathering in the Wellington Town Hall.

Top left: Youth delegates listen during a session in the Youth stream of the Congress.

Bottom left: Youth delegates applaud a presentation.