

"My mission for a cure for Diabetes - I did it my way" Kelva Campbell OAM

My Name is Kelva Campbell and I have been a Voluntary Worker/Special Ambassador for the Diabetes Research Foundation of WA since 1993. I joined the team at Royal Perth Hospital in July 1992- after my son, Darryl, informed me that he had diabetes. He had been diagnosed 10yrs earlier. He hadn't told me before because he didn't want to "upset" me. To my knowledge there are no other family members with diabetes.

Darryl was 17yrs old when he was diagnosed with Insulin Dependant Diabetes and 34 when he died after lapsing into a diabetic coma, in June 2000. This has torn my family's life apart. I decided then and there that I was not "throwing the towel in" – Darryl wouldn't have wanted that either. My mission was developed - "to assist in raising funds for diabetes research with the aim of finding a cure". I have travelled throughout WA by coach and train to inform everyone of the serious complications (blindness, kidney failure, heart disease and nerve damage) of diabetes and to give hope that we can find a cure for diabetes- by fund-raising for the Diabetes Research Foundation.

I have meet thousands of people with diabetes or with diabetes in the family and I have listened to so many sad stories. This gave me extra strength and encouragement to carry on as long as I possibly could – I would like to see a cure for diabetes in my lifetime so we had better hurry up!

Over the years I have made many friends and I have received kinship and support, certificates and plaques. In 1998 I received the very high award of "the Order of Australia Medal" (OAM) at the Queens Birthday Honors which I am so very proud of.

It's not all strawberries and cream, but I have loved the challenge!

Unfortunately I was diagnosed with bowel cancer in Dec 2003 and although I have had successful treatment for the disease I am unable to return to my voluntary work. I have found it difficult to settle down from my busy daily life and I still miss it terribly.

I sincerely thank all of the people who have helped me along the way- I know we all want to find a cure for diabetes.



Kelva Campbell OAM