

NEWS RELEASE

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Arlington (December 10, 2014) - Fifth grade students at Presidents Elementary heard a poignant message from Sierra Sandison about what it is like to be diagnosed with Type I diabetes and how everyone has something about them that doesn't measure up to the standards set by the media.

On July 13, 2014, Ms. Sandison won her Miss Idaho crown. She openly talked about the anger she felt when she received the diagnosis. As a teenager, she went through a challenging time of not taking care of herself, which ended when she heard about Nicole Johnson, winner of the 1997 Miss America title, who also has diabetes. Ms. Johnson wore her insulin pump during the Miss America contest and is now an advocate for diabetes who has gone on to write three cookbooks and her autobiography.

Ms. Sandison said she was inspired by Ms. Johnson's courageous approach to her diabetes. Sierra was then willing to wear her insulin pump openly. She expressed her desire to make a difference in the lives of children by being open about her own diabetes. She told the story of a young girl who approached her before a beauty pageant and asked about her insulin pump. When Ms. Johnson found out the girl was also diabetic, she felt that even if she only made a difference in that one girl's life and outlook, she had met her goal.

Ms. Sandison now speaks to groups of children around the country, bringing the message that it is good to appreciate the difficult challenges in life because they help you become the person you want to become. After asking the group of Presidents' fifth graders how many had experienced difficult situations, or have "something about them that doesn't measure up", she stated they are all still beautiful people with much to offer to their community. This was a great and timely message for students who are entering into the challenging times adolescence can bring.

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