

# SPREADING THE GOOD NEWS

By Christie Taylor, Diana Maiocco with  
information provided by Artie Mandelberg

## ARTIE MANDELBERG HAS BEEN A LONG TIME FIGHTER AGAINST JUVENILE DIABETES



image courtesy of: [www.jdrf.org](http://www.jdrf.org)

Producer/Director Artie Mandelberg has been actively involved with the Los Angeles Chapter of the *Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation* since his daughter Jennifer was diagnosed in 1990. He is happy to report that Jennifer, now 19 and a Pre-Med student at University of Texas at Austin, is healthy and has chosen to specialize in endocrinology as a way to help others stricken with this awful disease.

Since the previous issue of *Moonlighting Strangers* shed light on the cause and symptoms of juvenile diabetes, this article will focus on the progress being made to find a cure. Artie is happy to report that a cure for Jennifer, Will Mackenzie's family and thousands of others is within our grasp.

Islet transplantation – the transplantation of healthy insulin-producing islet cells into a patient with diabetes is one of the most exciting JDRF research undertakings being explored as a potential treatment for diabetes. What is islet transplantation? A normal pancreas contains clusters of cells known as islets, accounting for about two percent of the mass of the pancreas' tissue. Beta cells – one of the five types of cells in islets – produce the insulin needed for proper metabolism. In type 1 (juvenile) diabetes, the body's

immune system attacks and destroys the beta cells.

The only way to cure diabetes is to replace either the destroyed cells or replace their function. Whole-pancreas transplants have been successful for many years but because of significant risks the procedure has been limited primarily to recipients who are also undergoing kidney transplantation.

Since the 1970's, researchers have pursued the goal of islet transplantation – transplanting into people with type 1 diabetes only the islet cells that contain the needed insulin-producing beta cells. For decades the success rate remained under ten percent until 2000 when the demonstrated success of the Edmonton Protocol became a milestone in islet transplantation, engendering new hope for millions.

Compared to whole-pancreas transplantation, islet transplantation is a simpler and less invasive procedure. Healthy islets are isolated from a donor pancreas, purified, and then infused through a catheter (small tube) into the portal vein of the liver. Islet transplantation can be performed as an outpatient procedure. Following the transplant, patients take immunosuppressive drugs to keep their bodies from rejecting the new islets and to block the recurrence of diabetes.

When successful, islet transplantation can restore normal blood sugar without the need for insulin injections and signifi-

cantly improve recipients' quality of life, making them "normal" again, even after decades of struggle with type 1 diabetes.

Islet transplantation will never be a widespread treatment until the severe shortage of islets is addressed. The most likely new sources of islets are stem cells and "humanized" islets from animals. Unfortunately, the harvesting of embryonic stem cells is a hotly debated political issue that remains a significant roadblock for those of us with loved ones stricken by this horrible disease.

Artie's wife Stacy just finished a six-year term as a Board Member of the LA Chapter of JDRF and remains a member of the Advisory Board. Artie is currently serving his second year on the Board. Please support the *Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation* by donating money for research. More than 80% of all donations go directly to research or research-related education, which is one of the highest percentages of direct dollar donations among all non-profit organizations. Thank you.

### **JUVENILE DIABETES RESEARCH FOUNDATION**

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Information about JDRF was provided by Artie Mandelberg. Thanks Artie for sharing this with the *Moonlighting* fans.

## BRUCE WILLIS "MAKES A DIFFERENCE" FOR FOSTER CARE

Although Bruce Willis is a major movie star, he has still found the time to make a difference with his involvement with the Foster Care program. In fact, in July 2002, President Bush appointed him the National Spokesperson for Children in Foster Care. Bruce explains in his recently launched website [www.BruceWillis.com](http://www.BruceWillis.com) that he became interested in the Foster Care issue because of his desire to serve his country in some way. The issue came to his attention after he read about the 580,000 children in the system (134,000 of whom are available for adoption), so he volunteered to help.

Since his appointment by the President, Bruce has taken on many projects to benefit these children. One of the first was to tape a series of Public Service Announcements, some with First Lady Laura Bush. These PSA's have appeared on TV nationally to promote Foster Care and Adoption, and also on Bruce's website. Recently, no matter how light-hearted the event or how humorous the subject, Bruce nearly always promotes the issue, its problems, and the efforts to improve it. For example, he attended a special screening of *Rugrats Go Wild* (with his recent turn as Spike the Dog) for Senators, Members of Congress and Foster children at Union Station in Washington DC. He also met with Senator Larry Craig

of Idaho and Senator Bill Frist of Tennessee in June to discuss "A Call to Action" on behalf of children in the United States in the Foster Care system.

Since Bruce launched his website in July, it has been a real treat for his fans. However, it also provides him with another forum to bring awareness to the public. The first thing the website does is to tell us what Foster Care is. It explains how adults can act as surrogate parents to children who need them. They may be relatives, friends, or total strangers who just want to provide a home for a child. Through articles, statistics, and graphs, the website explains that the ultimate goal of Foster Care is to provide a home for children until they can either be reunited with their own families or placed for adoption with a new family. These activities, while sponsored and monitored by the government, largely depend on the private sector to succeed.

In addition to spotlighting events such as National Adoption Day which Bruce participated in last year, his website also promotes web links of others that do work on behalf of adoption, Foster Care, and the well being of children. There is a "featured link" for [AdoptUSKids](http://www.AdoptUSKids.org)

which profiles foster children waiting for adoption. (A more detailed description about the program, can also be found in the Oct./Nov 2002 issue of *Spreading the GOOD News*.) Another program that Bruce supports is *Art Start* [www.art-start.org](http://www.art-start.org), whose mission is to bring the arts to children in New York homeless shelters. Working with Rap mogul Russell Simmons, Bruce recently donated his own State-of-the-Art sound system to this youth outreach group.

And most recently, Bruce and his band, The Accelerators, performed a lively show at the Borgata Hotel Casino and Spa in Atlantic City. The concert was all the rage among the fans on his website, and a "never-to-be-forgotten" experience for all who were there. But more importantly, the event quietly raised \$250,000 for Foster Care. All this from a man who could focus solely on making movies, but wanted to use his celebrity to "Make a Difference."

To read more about Bruce's fundraiser for Foster Care, go to page 71 to read about Diana's and Joy's report.

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