

## 21 More Sleeps til USA Transplant Games

Louise Lerminiaux Wellness Consulting LRL

This past Saturday, I went up to Hansen Dam past Burbank in LA to do a sprint triathlon workout with a group of guys. One key participant I was looking forward to meeting was Zach. He's on his second kidney transplant and also competing in the Transplant Games in the triathlon event. Zach competed throughout his youth and college in cycling, soccer, and swimming. He got 4th place in the World Transplant Games last year in Australia. He hopes to medal this year in Madison. He believes in the positive aspects that exercise has made in his recovery and the necessity of it to feel normal.

The course we did was in preparation for a triathlon they are doing at that location at the end of August. I struggled a bit with the 400m swim cause it was in a 150m pool (that's long!). I did better on the 16 km bike (10 mile) and the 5km run (3.1 mile). I finished not too far behind the 6 guys who provided a lot of encouragement along the way. Zach in particular told me that in another year, I will be so much stronger because it takes time for all the scar tissue to heal. I finally had met someone I believed because I knew he had been through it, not once, but twice. People have great intentions and I am truly grateful for the support I receive. But there is something different when you have someone who has "been there, done that" tell you it will get better. They get what you are struggling with, without even saying a word.

There were a couple of times when he would circle back and ride or run with me for a bit cause he knew it was hard for me, and just said 'keep it up, it will get easier'. It is meeting people like him that I look forward to at these games. He described how there are 2 camps at the games – those who are in it because they can; and those who are competitive and want to prove to themselves and to others that they are high caliber athletes who happen to have a transplant or two. I may not be ready to medal this year but I fundamentally believe it will be possible.

Zach has a rare illness that caused kidney failure in his 30's. His dad donated to him first and the kidney lasted for 8 years until it rejected. The cause as far as the doctors can tell was purely not getting the right anti-rejection medication levels. He was on dialysis for a while before his mom donated her kidney 2 years ago and all indications are so far good.

When I asked him how it must have been tough to know that his first transplant was likely avoidable, he comment was "you know we are just experiments". That comment has mulled about in my mind the last few days cause it's basically true. I told him how one key initiative LifeTech is striving towards is personalized medicine to help minimize

## **21 More Sleeps til USA Transplant Games**

Louise Lerminiaux Wellness Consulting LRL

people like us being subjected to the "one size fits all" regime. One can only hope it comes sooner rather than later.