

Holiday Challenge Raises Awareness for Severe Allergic Drug Reactions

(Denver, CO) DECEMBER 15, 2014 – Over 500 individuals worldwide have participated through social media in a holiday challenge to raise awareness of Stevens Johnson Syndrome (SJS) and other severe allergic drug reactions. The challenge, started by Julie McCawley founder of the SJS Kids Support group, was initiated to share comradery and support among children who have experienced allergic reactions. Survivors of all ages and their families have joined in to spread the message.

Now 21 years old, Julie was diagnosed with SJS at 11 months old. Julie was hospitalized for 27 days and treated in the burn unit. Today Julie experiences life-long side effects including blindness in her right eye and dry eye syndrome.

“While growing up very few people had heard of SJS and as a child it is difficult to explain to others why you look the way you do, or why you wear sunglasses as many SJS survivors must,” said Julie. “Spreading awareness about how common allergic reactions are will hopefully prevent others from experiencing the same thing.”

There is no mandatory reporting system for allergic reactions, limiting the knowledge about the vastness of reactions as a whole. Nearly any prescription or over-the-counter medication can cause Stevens Johnson Syndrome. Symptoms include blistering of the skin, flu like symptoms, and severe conjunctivitis.

“Recently a young mother was diagnosed with SJS after taking an antibiotic that was prescribed for a friend,” said Julie. “Unfortunately her experience is not unique; dozens of people each year take the prescriptions of family and friends if they cannot afford to go to the doctor themselves and while we know we are not supposed to do this awareness of a possible reaction is the next best option.”

Learn more about the awareness challenge at the Stevens Johnson Syndrome Foundation Website or follow the campaign online at #EducationBeforeYouMedicate or #StevensJohnsonSyndromeAwareness.

About Stevens Johnson Syndrome (SJS)

The Stevens Johnson Syndrome Foundation is a 501c3 non-profit organization dedicated to bringing public awareness and research to adverse drug reactions that cause Stevens Johnson Syndrome (SJS) and TEN (Toxic Epidermal Necrolysis) through the use of prescription and over the counter medications. Adverse reactions account for approximately 150,000 deaths in the U.S. alone, making drug reactions the fourth leading cause of death in the United States. For more information please visit www.sjsupport.org or call the SJS Foundation at (303)635-1241.

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