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DIABETES CHAMPION

Fit4D CEO David Weingard

By Alison Massey MS, RD, LDN, CDE

The everyday moments that make up our lives often do not prompt significant change. Difficult or challenging events are catalysts for a different direction for our lives. This was also true for David Weingard, CEO and founder of Fit4D.

A successful Microsoft executive and physically fit triathlete, Weingard was training five hours a day for his next competitive event when he suddenly lost 20 pounds in three weeks. At 36, the triathlete's condition quickly deteriorated to the point at which he was barely able to walk three blocks. A trip to the doctor confirmed the diagnosis of Type 1 diabetes. Overwhelmed with this life-altering diagnosis, Weingard was surprised and frustrated that more support and education weren't provided at the time. Diabetes education classes at a nearby hospital weren't available for another six weeks. Concerns about how to manage his diabetes and whether he would be able to race again remained unanswered. Persistent in his pursuit for answers, education and support, Weingard sought out the expertise of a certified diabetes educator (CDE) on his own.

"[My diabetes educator], Cecilia, went out of her way to fit me into her already booked schedule," Weingard recalls. "She met with me over the course of a few months and compassionately gave me guidance on how to acclimate to my new lifestyle."

Weingard says the support he received was invaluable – so much so that he decided to seek more guidance from CDEs throughout his diabetes journey. "Thanks to this newfound understanding of the complex disease, I was able to become productive again in my personal and professional life," he adds. "I figured out how to train and race Ironman Triathlons with diabetes and realized that I could accomplish anything if I had the right knowledge, support and mentality."

The birth of Fit4D

Weingard's medical journey coupled with his professional experience with next generation technology lead him to his "a-ha!" moment as an entrepreneur. On his way to an Ironman triathlon in Idaho, he thought to himself, "What if I could bring everyone a 'Cecilia' by scaling the personal coaching aspect [of diabetes education] using technology?" This desire to expand the access to CDEs to all individuals living with diabetes was the concept behind Fit4D.

Making this dream a reality didn't come without sacrifices. Building and launching the company consumed many nights and weekends. When Fit4D partnered and finally launched with Bayer Diabetes, Weingard left his corporate position with Microsoft to devote himself full-time to building Fit4D. Fit4D's technology-enabled coaching now brings the personalized

human touch and expertise of CDEs to help close the gap in care and empower individuals to improve their diabetes self-management. Fit4D partners with pharmaceutical companies, payers and accountable care organizations to improve health outcomes, with a track record of improving adherence to branded prescriptions by 20 percent and reducing hemoglobin A1C values.

Redefining diabetes education

Currently, Fit4D has a network of over 100 CDEs who provide coaching to individuals with diabetes. The Fit4D technology platform offers benefits that traditional education often does not include, like multiple communication methods and flexible scheduling, so individuals can work with their coaches at a time that is most convenient to them.

"My vision for Fit4D is that our company will continue to grow, so that our CDEs can reach all people living with diabetes on Earth," says Weingard. "By providing the masses with personalized diabetes self-management education and support, more people will be empowered to improve their lives and, by extension, the lives of those they love."

You can learn more about Fit4D at www.fit4d.com. ■

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