

## **Richstel's Story - A Father's Joy, and Inspiration.**

**Twenty-three-year-old Richstel who had been living with diabetes from the age of 9 years, passed away in June 2020.**

**Complications brought on by her condition, worsened, and Richstel pregnant, with her second child became another victim to this insidious disease, diabetes.**

**Like many others before her, diabetes has claimed countless lives of both young and old. Diabetes does not discriminate, age, gender, culture, are all affected.**

**It is estimated that 400 million people world-wide are suffering from diabetes, at any-one time.**

**Insulin for life Australia who has been supplying free diabetes aid to the Philippines for many years, first met Richstel at a children's diabetes camp run by the organisation "Sweet Alert" in Cebu in 2014. Many children, like Richstel have benefited from such programs and camps.**

**Richstel's 5-year-old surviving daughter, Shamara Mae, is now being cared for by her grandfather, and other family members**

**Richelieu D Saycon 59 yrs old, Richstel's father, was asked about his daughter's, life, her contribution, and standing in the family.**

**He being a single parent after his wife passed away when Richstel was 9 years old, then discovered his daughter had this condition, diabetes.**

**He agreed to this interview by email, the questions and answers are listed below.**

**What did he admire most about his daughter?**

The thing that I really like about my daughter is her drive to do something. Even if I don't like her to do a certain thing, she always pushes through and still does it.

**Some of the struggles he had raising a child with diabetes?**

There are so many struggles and challenges to be mentioned. When you're a relative especially with a **9-year-old** who is diabetic it is really hard. I would even worry how I could discipline a child considering I'm only a single parent. Her mother has passed since she was **9 years old** and that was when I could say it was really a struggle. I was working and I was having a hard time adjusting and controlling the situation

**How did he feel when he first found out Richstel had diabetes?**

Of course, you'd really be concerned especially when your child is only **9 years old** but even though this circumstance happened, I have accepted it whole-heartedly. I did feel pain considering that she grew up healthy and diabetes just suddenly happened.

## **How did her friends treat her once it was known she had diabetes?**

When it comes to her friends and school experiences, I wasn't really sure how they were treating her knowing she has diabetes. Of course, for kids their age, having an illness wasn't normal for them but what made me believe in her was that despite what she faced, she really survived through it all.

## **How did the family cope?**

Facing problems and finding the strength to do so is normal especially when you have the guts to face it. If you don't have the courage to face your problems, then you'll never overcome it. There will always be people who will help, relatives who will extend their aid and if others see that you are doing your best in dealing with your problems, they will feel pity and help you. Challenges can always be surpassed as long as you have the desire to do so.

## **What is the one thing he would like her to be remembered for?**

I want them to remember how friendly she was. She knew that her life-span was limited and she lived every day to the fullest. She was always down to do anything even if it made us argue sometimes. I'm sad of what happened but I can't do anything anymore.

## **Some special highlights he remembers about Richstel's life?**

She was really strong-willed and spirited. Even if she had diabetes, she made sure she would still bear a child, something that would make us all remember her so if the day comes, she is not here anymore, we can look at her daughter and see her. She excelled in everything that she did and she tried her best to be able to see and raise her daughter.

**I want to thank Richelieu, for his time and effort in sharing his thoughts, feelings, and pain through this difficult time, of losing a loving daughter, and grandchild to diabetes.**

**A big thank you to Richstel's friend, Eurika Briol also known as "Bam Bam" who contributed to and translated Richstel's story, as well as sharing her own story, in August 2020.**

**Interview conducted by email**

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Insulin for Life Board Member**

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**Richstel pictured with daughter 5-year-old Shamara Mae, March 2020**