

## **CameronHelps founder David Harris speaks at Trillium Hospital**

David Harris, CEO and founder of CameronHelps was the guest speaker at Mississauga's Trillium Hospital on November 22, 2011. He was invited to talk to a run-therapy group from the hospital's pediatric diabetes clinic.

David is used to speaking to teens at high schools and in hospital settings about depression and suicide prevention, but on this occasion it was different. He was asked to speak to a running group at the hospital whose primary goal is to help 12-18 year olds manage their diabetes through exercise.

Michelle Bloom, a social worker at the hospital who leads the run-therapy program is also a running coach with David at the Credit Valley Hospital program for at-risk teens. "I've heard David speak before about his story and thought it would be inspiring to have him talk to the group. Coincidentally, November is Diabetes Month and there was an additional reason to have David talk to the group as we were nearing the completion of our 12-week run program."

The program participants have type 1 diabetes and running will not bring down their sugar levels, explains Bloom. In fact, type 1 diabetics have to check their levels four times a day and monitor what they eat 24/7. "Exercise is more work for them—for example they have to test their sugar levels before they begin running and some of the kids are anxious about whether their levels may drop." However, running reduces stress and increases well-being—something CameronHelps has been promoting through its support of run-therapy programs.

The Trillium program has volunteer coaches that help teens and their families cope with diabetes (the parents also take part in the running portion). There are regular guest speakers and at the end of the three months, all the participants take part in the Burlington Santa Shuffle 5k run where everyone dresses up like Santa Claus.

David spoke about how running helped him deal with depression and the work of his charity which has now expanded to include a run-therapy program in Hamilton and in Kitchener. He also spoke about his own father who was a type 1 diabetic later on in his life.