

United in Health

Did You Know?

More than 1.4 million people in the U.S.—including approximately 8,000 Nebraskans—have Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis. IBD (inflammatory bowel disease) is largely a disease of the developed world.



Despite being diagnosed with a severe case of Crohn's disease in her late 20's and needing to have a foot of her intestine removed, Kristi admitted she wasn't involved with the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America (CCFA) until her son, Ilum, was diagnosed at the age of 11. Kristi said, "I feel fortunate since I have never had a serious reoccurrence and only have mild symptoms at times. I think more about helping the kids who have it, especially since my son has been diagnosed."

Several years ago, after Ilum couldn't shake what they initially thought was the stomach flu, they went to their pediatrician. He connected Ilum's symptoms with his mom's history pretty quickly and ordered a blood test for Crohn's. A colonoscopy found that Ilum's intestines and stomach were inflamed. He was immediately put on a steroid and then a preventive drug and has had only one flare up that required steroids again. At this point, he is considered to be in remission.

Mother and son now share a goal to raise awareness for Crohn's. One way they do that is by helping out with and participating in the annual "Take Steps" CCFA walk in Lincoln. Kristi co-chairs the event, and Ilum and a friend will be Honored Heroes at this year's walk. Ilum has also attended Camp Oasis - a camp just for kids with Crohn's and Colitis. He has been awarded with the "Outstanding Camper" award and would now like to attend leadership training and be a counselor at the camp.

