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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **COMMUNITY INVITED TO SUPPORT LOCAL GYMNAST IN QUEST TO CURE JUVENILE DIABETES**

### **“Flip For A Cure” Gymnastics Competition to Benefit Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation**

Lena Ekman looks like any other spunky, energetic young athlete at the Go For It USA gymnastics academy. She laughs and smiles easily, works hard in practice, and loves spending time with her friends. In most ways, she is just like any other hopeful young gymnast. But in one important way, she is different. Lena is fighting Juvenile Diabetes. Her story is much like those of as many as 15,000 children diagnosed in the US each year. But Lena isn't taking it lying down. She's fighting it. And her coaches and teammates at Go For It USA are joining her in that fight.

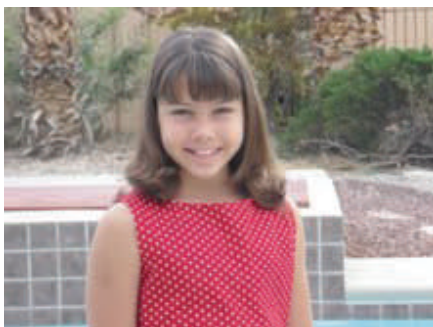
October 1-3, Go For It USA will host the second annual Flip For A Cure meet, a gymnastics competition for levels 3-6. However this meet has a twist. Each team will be competing for gymnastics scores and trophies, but they will also be competing to raise the most money for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, or JDRF. Teams competing at the meet, held at Go For It USA in North Las Vegas, include Barefoot Gymnastics, from Utah, KIPS Gymnastics, from California, and from the Las Vegas Valley, Go For It USA Perfectors, Gymcats, Desert Gymcats, Brown's, Flip For Me, and Sasso's.

For each athlete entered, Go For It USA will donate \$5 to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF). Anyone can support the team of their choice simply by going online at [jdrfevents.donordrive.com/event/flipforacure](http://jdrfevents.donordrive.com/event/flipforacure). Click the “Donate” button, and put the name of the team you want to support in the search menu. Spectators and attendees will also have an opportunity to donate as they enter, and can do so in the name of any of the gyms competing. At the end of the meet, the team with the most money raised in their name will receive a trophy. In this competition, truly everyone can be a winner — especially those suffering from Type 1 Diabetes. It's something Lena and her mother are thrilled to be a part of — to combine the sport she loves with fighting a disease she is determined to beat.

When Lena was 4, she had already enrolled in the preschool gymnastics class at Go For It USA. It was over the Christmas break that Lena was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes. Lena's body doesn't produce insulin, a hormone that helps our bodies change the food we eat into the energy we need. Because her body doesn't produce insulin, she has to regulate her blood sugar by injecting or pumping insulin. Remembering those first days, Lena's mother Julie says “Two weeks and eight shots a day later, she returned to her gymnastics class without missing a beat!” Six months later, Lena was fitted with an insulin pump, which she wears 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Lena did not let any of it slow her down. She has competed successfully at levels 4,5,6, and 7, and is currently training 20 hours a week at level 8.

Julie says Lena's doctors have been thrilled with her progress, and credit her disciplined approach to testing and controlling her blood sugar, as well as the benefits of being an athlete. According to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, “Physical exercise is important for everyone's health and well-being, but it's especially important for people with diabetes. The steps a person with diabetes takes to improve overall fitness can be greatly beneficial, because regular exercise helps lower blood sugar levels and keep them in [the] target range.” Lena's mother also points out, “The coaches at Go For It USA have been an essential part of Lena's success in gymnastics. They did not hesitate to learn how to care for her after she was diagnosed with diabetes. ... Lena will continue to train at Go For It USA as long as she remains healthy and happy. She is truly an inspiration to all! “

Go For It USA offers instruction in gymnastics, tumbling, cheer, and tae kwon do, as well as offering camps over the summer and birthday parties. Go For It USA is located at 3105 Coleman Street in North Las Vegas.



For more information, or to schedule an interview, please contact Brandy Bauman at 658-9003.

