



Alan J. Lewis, Ph.D.
President & Chief Executive Officer

The Magic of JDRF

Despite the lousy economic news, general worldwide funk, and soaring medical costs, I've never been more excited about the opportunities that lie ahead of us at JDRF. Why, you might ask?

Certainly, being the eternal optimist has always been a part of my makeup. But the simple fact is that in the few short months I've been here at JDRF, I've seen more passion, more commitment, more focus, and more promising science than I could have hoped for. I'm thrilled I made the choice to come here, because I honestly believe that we have the wherewithal to achieve our mission—to find a cure for type 1 diabetes and its complications, fast.

Three things I've seen in my brief tenure with JDRF make me certain that we are going to get this done.

First, the scientific direction we have created and the science itself that we are funding is right on target. Through its cure therapeutics approach, JDRF has positioned its research to address all aspects of type 1 diabetes—reversing the immune response that causes diabetes, restoring normal blood sugar by replacing or regenerating insulin-producing cells, maintaining tight metabolic control, and preventing or reversing complications. That enables us to fund science leading to cures and treatments for people in all stages of diabetes. Because of this, we'll be able to better assess research that quickly and successfully leads to treatments and cures.

Second, this has clearly been a difficult time for JDRF, for all medical research foundations, businesses, as well as all of us individuals. We have had to make some hard decisions over the past few months in terms of our operating and human resources, and the funding we can devote to research. I have been impressed with the thorough process we have used to focus on the very best scientific projects, with the greatest momentum, that will allow us to quicken the pace of science leading to a cure. In a very tough fundraising

environment, we've managed down costs in an efficient, effective, and yet professional and personally caring way. If we can reduce expenses by more than \$8 million, treat people with respect and dignity, be mindful of the personal situations of our donors and volunteers, and still fund more than \$100 million in cutting-edge research in the most difficult of times, I cannot wait to see what JDRF can accomplish when times get better, as they most assuredly will.

Lastly, not a day goes by when I don't receive another call, another e-mail, or another letter from a JDRF donor or volunteer, wishing me well. Each correspondence comes with a personal story. About the precise day their daughter was diagnosed. Or the time they awoke in an emergency room after a hypoglycemic blackout. Or how their father eventually lost a kidney, or his eyesight to diabetes. However, what I hear isn't sadness, or despair. Yes, there is frustration that another year has come and gone and they or their loved ones still have type 1 diabetes. But I can see and hear the passion. And the commitment. And the hope.

At the 2008 IdeaFestival, a conference that brings together creative thinkers from different disciplines, a presenter told the audience about the "aha" moment she experienced that was the inspiration to create a social networking web site that allows students to showcase scientific experiments. She was watching her six-year-old daughter playing outside. "Look," her daughter said, as she scraped two gray rocks on a large flat stone, and watched them turn white. "It's magic." The presenter, a researcher, said, "Actually, it's science." Without looking up, her daughter answered, "Maybe. But I think it's magic."

At its most basic, JDRF is science. I believe we are the best diabetes science in the world, both in the way we fund people, projects, and institutions, and in how we provide leadership within the scientific community to set the pace and direction for all diabetes science.

But for our constituents, JDRF is magic.

I'm proud to be a part of this. It's time for us to do a little magic. ●

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