James Routman Co-Founds D.R.I.V.E. to Support Camp Nejeda and Help Children With Type 1 Diabetes Build Independence

PARKLAND, FL, UNITED STATES, September 21, 2026 / EINPresswire.com/ -- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an estimated 314,000 children and adolescents under 20 are living with diagnosed Type 1 diabetes in the United States. For children living with Type 1 diabetes, independence doesn't come just from growing up and experiencing typical milestones. Independence comes from learning how to manage a condition that can affect nearly every part of daily life, from checking blood sugar and monitoring food intake to treating highs and lows, planning around activities, and sometimes waking up in the middle of the night for care. James Routman understood that reality firsthand through his family. Routman's father has Type 1 diabetes, and growing up around the daily ups and downs of diabetes management showed him that the condition isn't just a medical diagnosis. It can shape routines, decisions, and entire households.



James Routman



Routman with Camp Nejeda's campers and counselors

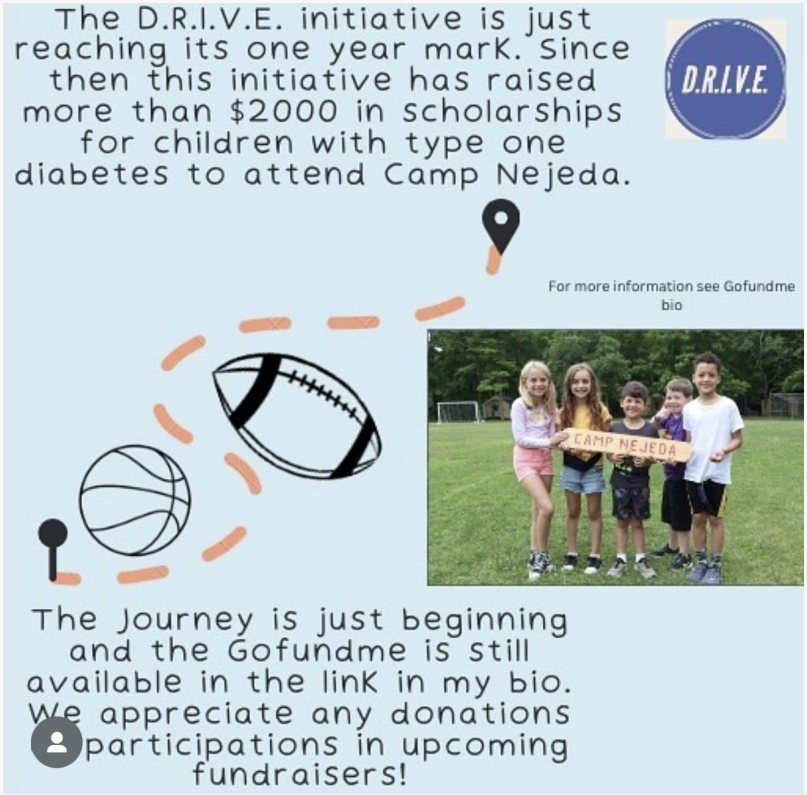
That understanding eventually inspired James and his brother, Matthew Routman, to co-found D.R.I.V.E., which stands for Diabetics Revitalized through Impactful and Valuable Experiences, when James was in

seventh grade. Through D.R.I.V.E., the brothers work to promote youth independence within the diabetes community by raising money for diabetes self-care camps, primarily supporting Camp Nejeda, and helping more people understand what children with Type 1 diabetes experience every day.

For Routman, Camp Nejeda became a natural organization to support because of the role it plays in helping children with Type 1 diabetes feel understood while learning lifelong management skills. Located in Stillwater, New Jersey, Camp Nejeda offers sleepaway camp, day camp, and family camp programs designed for children with Type 1 diabetes and their families. Routman sees the camp as more than a place for children to spend the summer. He sees it as a place where medical care, independence, friendship, and confidence come together. Through its focus on education, empowerment, camaraderie, supportive programming, and fun, Camp Nejeda creates an environment where children can be surrounded by others who understand what they experience daily.



D.R.I.V.E. March Madness fundraiser flyer



D.R.I.V.E. social media post

Through D.R.I.V.E., Routman and his brother have raised money for Camp Nejeda through GoFundMe, Camp Nejeda's donation site, and fundraisers including Super Bowl Squares and March Madness brackets, where the winnings are split between the winner and a donation to the camp. Routman is also organizing a hockey tournament, where player entrance fees will be donated to support Camp Nejeda. Funds help support scholarships, medical supplies, and other camp needs.

Routman's connection to Camp Nejeda became even more personal when he began volunteering there as a camp counselor traveling from Parkland, Florida. Before camp began, he arrived early for intensive training, where he learned about nutrition, carb counting, bolus injections, continuous glucose monitoring, and what to do when a camper experiences low blood sugar. Although Routman had grown up around diabetes because of his father, the training showed him how much more there was to learn about supporting children as they manage the condition themselves.

Routman's effort to learn and support campers was also noticed by Camp Nejeda staff. Kiara "KJ" McGonigal, a 2026 Unit Leader with the Nejeda Foundation, shared that Routman approached the role with a clear commitment to understanding the camp community. "His willingness to learn, enthusiasm, and dedication made him an exceptional member of our camp team. Despite not having Type 1 diabetes himself, he took the time to understand the unique needs of our campers and embraced his role wholeheartedly. He was a positive influence, a dependable teammate, and truly made a difference in the lives of our campers." For Routman, that same commitment showed up most clearly in the moments when campers needed support, patience, and reassurance.

One moment that stayed with Routman came during the night, when a camper kept experiencing low blood sugar and grew worried. Routman sat with him while he had fast-acting sugar to bring his blood sugar back up, staying by his side until he felt better and safe enough to fall asleep. At the end of the week, the same camper gave Routman a hug and thanked him for how much fun he had at camp. For Routman, that moment showed how much it can mean for a child with Type 1 diabetes to feel supported in a difficult moment and still be able to leave camp remembering the joy of the experience. "Seeing children with Type 1 diabetes feel supported, confident, and surrounded by people who understand what they go through makes me so proud to be part of something that has such a positive impact," Routman shared. "Through my work with Camp Nejeda, I've learned that making a difference doesn't always require doing something huge. Sometimes, just showing up, supporting someone, or helping them feel understood can have an impact."

Through D.R.I.V.E., Routman hopes to turn his family's personal connection to Type 1 diabetes into continued support for children learning to manage their condition with confidence. By raising funds, volunteering at Camp Nejeda, and creating new opportunities for awareness, Routman is working to make the initiative about more than a single donation. For him, D.R.I.V.E. is a way to help children feel supported while also helping more people understand the daily reality of living with Type 1 diabetes.

Routman hopes to continue growing D.R.I.V.E. in college and beyond. He plans to use the larger campus community to raise awareness about Type 1 diabetes, get more students involved, hold additional fundraisers, and continue supporting Camp Nejeda. He also hopes to become involved in diabetes advocacy groups in college, building on the work he and his brother began

when they first started the initiative.

To support James Routman and D.R.I.V.E., please consider supporting Camp Nejeda directly, donating through GoFundMe, or purchasing needed camp items through Camp Nejeda's Amazon Wishlist. For questions about the initiative, please contact Jamesroutman5@gmail.com.

About James Routman
James Routman is a student at North Broward Preparatory School in Coconut Creek, Florida, where he serves as Executive Treasurer of student government, is a member of the National Honor Society, and has earned High Honor Roll recognition. Routman is also a three-time Florida high school hockey state champion and a teaching assistant at North Broward, where he supports middle school students with learning disabilities through individual and group instruction. Outside of school, he volunteers as a math and reading tutor for elementary and middle school students with dyslexia and dyscalculia.

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