

Bees find a sweet home on campus

Kelsie Stella
Staff Writer

For a few years now, the Bowie Earth Club has been trying tirelessly to purchase some bees in order to teach a bee-keeping class as a branch off of FFA. Senior Lili Benitez is the reason that there are now bees on campus.

Benitez is known around the Bowie campus as the “bee kid” due to her constant attempts and passion over bringing bees to Bowie’s campus.

“One of the things I’ve essentially been trying to do in my four years here, is to get bees on campus for a class or an after school activity,” Benitez said. “I’m with the Earth Club and I thought it would be really cool if we got beehives and housed them by the farms.”

Some students may be a little apprehensive about being so close to bees since they can be pesky and sometimes sting, but not Benitez.

“I went to the Agricultural teacher Ms. Black the end of last school year because I had heard that she also really wanted bees,” Benitez said. “Miss Black had actually purchased all of the equipment to raise bees. She had suits and hives and everything, she just didn’t know where she could actually get bees.”

When Benitez found out that she was not the only person on the campus that day dreamed about acquiring bees, she started to get serious and began to track down someone she could get bees from.

“I remembered in middle school an organization came out and taught us how to bee-keep,” Benitez said. “So I contacted them regularly since they do educational outreach and worked out a plan to get bees at Bowie. They gave



Bee-ware: Joined around the hive, mentor Erin Johnston and seniors Lili Benitez and Angel Reyes make sure things are in order with the bees. Each hive was being checked for nectar and to make sure no mites were among the bees. *Photo by Granger Coats*

us a bunch of bees and now we check up on the hives that we have on the FFA farm all the time.”

The bees were donated by the American Honeybee Protection Agency that Benitez remembered learning from in middle school.

“I wanted bees on campus because they’re extremely important to the environment,” Benitez said. “And they’re also just really fascinating creatures and I’ve always been really interested in beekeeping.”

Benitez admits that wanting the bees on campus was selfish but be-

lieves that the good that the bees do for the earth is enough to balance out the selfishness.

“I mean it’s cool that there are bees on the farm and that students can learn to bee-keep and stuff but do we really need them?” freshman Kiara Gonzales said.

Buying bees when they are around campus isn’t logical to Gonzales.

“I mean, there’s enough bees in the trash cans all over campus, they seem to be thriving and there’s a gross amount,” Gonzales said. “It confuses me on

why someone would want more of them.”

Most students on campus have no idea about the bees being raised on the farms but the ones who do either strongly support it or strongly oppose it.

“Personally I don’t think the bees should be raised like that,” freshman Lauren Munoz said. “They’d probably be happier and be doing greater things for the environment if they weren’t being raised in captivity.”

Living in captivity does not actually affect the way the bees live because they

have all been reported as healthy and strong by Benitez.

“It doesn’t affect me and I guess I don’t really have an opinion on the Bowie bees,” Gonzales said. “As long as the bees stay off campus on the farm mind-ing their own business, I’ll be happy.”

Even though Thomason doesn’t believe in animals living in captivity he does agree that Benitez’ dream come true about having bees on campus is pretty fantastic.

“I’m happy that she got what she worked so hard

for,” Munoz said. “She spent all four years of high school pushing for bee hives and she got it and I think that’s awesome.”

The goal of having bees on the Bowie campus is to provide a way to be educated on their anatomy and how to properly care for them.

“I love the bees and words can’t describe how excited I’ve been about finally obtaining them,” Benitez said. “I’m glad that students will continue to get to learn about the bees next year and in the many years that follow.” ★

Senior fights a life-long disease with no sign of a cure

Violet Glenewinkel
Student Life Editor

A simple prick of the finger or injection, done five times a day, can determine the well-being of a patient with type one diabetes.

Senior Katy Jacobs was diagnosed years ago at an unusual young age that, to this day, affects her everyday life.

“Initially, I didn’t really understand what was happening,” Jacobs said. “Once I got to the hospital and they started sticking me with needles which was when I got really scared and upset.”

Type one is rare, only 5% of the population being diagnosed with it, and symptoms usually occur when people are in their twenties. For Jacobs, things were different.

“A virus attacked my immune system and attacked the cells in my body that make insulin, causing my pancreas to shut down,” Jacobs said.

Insulin is a specific hormone that gets rid of sugar in your bloodstream, but the absence of it forces Jacobs to take daily health procedures.

“I have to use synthetic insulin, which I take through an insulin pump, sort of like an IV in my stomach,” Jacobs said. “I have to manually enter my blood sugar levels and the amount of carbohydrates I had.”

It took Jacobs a while to learn how to care for herself after the diagnosis.

“I had to learn how to count carbs, test my blood sugar, and give myself the proper doses of insulin,” Jacobs said.

Right from the start, Jacobs’s family gave her support and guidance.

“My family had to make some big adjustments and learn about the disease like I did,” Jacobs said. “They have been there at all of my appointments and I am so grateful for them.”

Jacobs has received different responses about her disease from friends, the most common emotion being confusion.

“I found out because she just randomly stuck a needle in her side and I was totally shocked and kind of afraid to ask what she was doing,” senior Bryn Williams said.

After six years by Jacobs’s side, Williams has gotten used to her dealing with the diabetes.

“I’ve known her for about six years now so I’ve seen the worst and I’ve been there through her changing from insulin injections through needles to the pump this last year,” Williams said.

The strength Jacobs acquires is evident in how she deals with her disease.

“The fact that she can not only live life beyond how others choose to, but also make light of her situation is so amazing to me,” Williams said.

She has gone to lengths of inspiring others like Williams with her attitude.

“If she can deal with diabetes all day, everyday, and go above and beyond in life, I think anything is possible for someone like me,” Williams said.

Seeing the effects the disease takes on Jacobs is what Williams really remembers.

“It’s really hard to watch because you can’t



Blood work: Senior Katy Jacobs prepares a drop of her blood for blood sugar testing. Because of type one diabetes, she must check her blood five times a day. *Photo courtesy of Elise Jacobs*

really help the problem, just be there for her,” Williams said.

Even though it’s a consistent thing, Jacobs acts as if the diabetes isn’t even there nor complains of it.

“She hardly ever complains about the hardships that it brings her, which is what makes her so strong,” Williams said. “She is one of those people who is so outgoing and strong that you would never know she had diabetes until she told you.”

Jacobs isn’t afraid to inform people of her disease either.

“She’s really open to explaining it to people who don’t understand,” Williams said.

Friends like senior Summer Hawkins have been looking out for her since elementary school.

“In elementary and middle school I was always her ‘buddy’ to accompany her to the nurse when her blood sugar was low,” Hawkins said.

To this day, Jacobs’s peers take precautions with her.

“I look out for her a little bit more than others I would say, but that is

mainly just because I want to make sure she stays healthy,” Hawkins said.

Before Jacobs was diagnosed, there were tell-tale signs of what was going on with her health.

“I lost an extreme amount of weight which is a major sign for type one diabetes, I was only in second grade so I shouldn’t have been losing weight that fast,” Jacobs said.

Jacobs has to keep her blood sugar perfect or symptoms will begin to show in her health and behavior.

“When my blood sugar gets too low I feel really dizzy and hungry,” Jacobs said. “And when it’s high I get really sleepy, hot, and thirsty.”

These symptoms may seem minor but they can lead to more drastic measures.

“My diabetes can often spike out of control which makes me feel really sick and I have to miss school,” Jacobs said.

According to Jacobs father, Gary Jacobs, there is no history of diabetes in their family.

“It was totally unexpected, a shock, out of the blue,” Gary said. “We felt so bad for Katy, this little girl who was now going to have to deal with this disease for the rest of her life.”

After ten years of dealing with the disease, there were moments of stress that Katy experienced.

“Early on, she had moments when she would break down,” Gary said. “I think she was sad for herself and angry at the universe and who can blame her?”

But breakdowns and

doubts were a rarity.

“Katy took control of her diabetes, pricking her finger to test her blood and giving herself insulin injections multiple times a day,” Gary said. “I’m an adult and I would have a hard time doing that.”

To be safe, some of Katy’s good friends have needed to learn about emergency procedures involving her blood sugar levels.

“On occasion we have instructed her friends how to administer a glucagon shot in case of an emergency,” Gary said.

Both of Katy’s parents gave her hope to hold onto.

“We explained to Katy that while it was an unfortunate break that she had diabetes, it was a controllable condition that need not keep her from a normal life,” Gary said.

Katy has been able to keep a positive outlook on her situation.

“It might be a life threatening disease, but it has taught me many lessons that I am very grateful for,” Katy said.

To her, the disease is something that must be taken care of like an everyday, normal thing and others who have diabetes should do the same.

“Look at your disease as nothing more than brushing your teeth,” Katy said. “You don’t want to do it all the time, but if you don’t take care of it, it will only hurt you in the long run.”

Katy advises to keep moving forward through the struggles.

“Keep your head high, there might be some days where you feel like you can’t handle it, but trust me you can,” Katy said. ★