

### Blog-a-thon Day #6

We rose bright and early this morning to get to the Phoenix Zoo by 6:30 AM. This is a local annual event. We have walked each year since it began eight years ago. Kyle did not get to walk last year due to his cycles, so today was extra special.

There's a lot to like about the Zoowalk.

I am always touched by the people who show up to walk on our team to honor Kyle and others Kim works with.

For the last five or six years, our team shirts have been red with the title of my book "It's All About Attitude" on the front. I love seeing that message on everyone's shirt.

It's wonderful to see all the children and adults with autism out with their families and friends. Comraderie is nice.

Autism events are one of a few situations where I feel Kyle can be himself and it's ok. He still gets "looks" sometimes and in my mind I think, yes, that's what you're walking for, people. I realize they are just surprised or curious and that's ok.

The Zoowalk for Autism Research is an annual walk held to raise funds for the Autism/Asperger's Research program at ASU. The research is not cure oriented. Typically, it is biomedical research looking for treatments that can help people with autism get nutritional support that will help them lead healthier, improved lives.

## Zoowalk 2012

Written by Gayle Nobel

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This is a local walk where large amounts of funds do not go into the pockets of administrators but directly to research that can have beneficial effects on people with autism and their families.

It is a community event that is not part of a large national organization. I like to see Phoenix people out supporting other people in Phoenix.

*"This year's Zoowalk was dedicated to raising funds for a one year multi-treatment study for children and adults with autism. This study will involve a combination of special vitamins, minerals, essential fatty acids, carnitine (to boost energy metabolism), and special diet (gluten-free, casein-free) that we believe will significantly help many individuals."*

On a personal note, my brother Philip (who also has autism) walks with us too. I don't see him as often as I wish I did, and usually not with Kyle, so this is really nice. Maybe this year will be the nudge to change that.

Kyle's improved comfort and confidence level at the Zoowalk each year has been a great indicator of his growth. By definition, fundraiser walks are crowded and the first couple of years this was very stressful for Kyle. Each year he gets more comfortable. As he carefully made his way through the throngs of people today, I noticed he was the most relaxed I had ever seen.

Even though today we had an added bonus of cooler weather for most of the walk, making the stroll through the zoo that much more pleasant, we are still struggling with post Zoowalk fatigue. This is a syndrome which hits us every year.

To all those who showed up this morning and/or made a donation, a heartfelt thank you.

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