



(Front) Gina Martorana and Kelsey Diamantis; (back) Rita Kissel, Maureen Press and Colleen Currier



Kelsey Diamantis



(Front to back) Diane Diamantis, Cindy Menke, Kelsey Diamantis and Ellen Budish

FAMILY MATTERS

The Kelsey B. Diamantis TS Scholarship Family Foundation Doesn't Let Tourette's Syndrome Stand In The Way Of Education || BY LICIA AVELAR

When Boca Raton's Kelsey Diamantis, who was diagnosed with Tourette's syndrome at 11 years old, was applying for college, her family couldn't find any help to ease the financial burden.

"I can't tell you how much we looked online, to no avail," says Diane Diamantis, Kelsey's mother. "We talked about the fact that someone should start a program of scholarships, even if she couldn't take advantage of it anymore, for the kids that came after her. We decided that, when she graduated and had time to help with it, we'd do something."

Her parents managed to fund Kelsey's attendance at Florida Gulf Coast University. But, after she graduated in May 2014, Kelsey and Diane created The Kelsey B. Diamantis TS Scholarship Fam-

ily Foundation, Inc., nicknamed Dollars 4 Tic Scholars, to provide financial assistance for other students with Tourette's syndrome, a neurological disorder characterized

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— Diane Diamantis, co-founder, The Kelsey B. Diamantis TS Scholarship Family Foundation, Inc.

by chronic and involuntary motor and vocal tics. It officially became a nonprofit that summer.

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there with so many random qualifications but not for kids with Tourette's," says Diane. "It was time, and it was needed."

The nonprofit accepts applications from college students with Tourette's syndrome nationwide and awards a handful of scholarships each year. Dollars 4 Tic Scholars has distributed 13 scholarships since its inception, and, this year, it presented five. To qualify for a scholarship, a student must be a U.S. citizen; have a 2.5 GPA; have a diagnosis of Tourette's syndrome; and be taking a full course load at a four-year school or at a two-year school, with plans to earn a bachelor's degree.

The organization receives funding through personal donations and grants, and it has hosted several fundraising events, says Diane: "We have

a fun fundraising event every year, the D4TS (Dollars 4 Tic Scholars) Derby, in February to raise money for our summer camp sponsorships."

In June, they organized the Third Annual Gals' Afternoon Out Summer Camp Paint Party at A Painting Fiesta in Boca Raton.

The nonprofit also annually sponsors two children to attend summer camp.

"The camp we currently support is in Georgia, Camp Twitch and Shout," Diane says. "Just one week every year, children ages 7 to 17 get to come to camp and be with others with Tourette's syndrome, where they are accepted for who they are. It is a fantastic program." ◉

For more information, visit dollars4ticscholars.org.