



JOSH GLAZOV— Thrills of Skydiving

A busy weekend for 30-year-old jumpmaster Josh Glazov can mean 25 to 30 jumps, each time leaping out of a plane with a novice skydiver attached to him, for the 14,000-foot drop. Hooking his charge's harness to the special rings on the front of his own harness, the two of them descend using Glazov's parachute.

By relying on a jumpmaster, the passenger "pretty much gets the whole experience of jumping" without having to learn all about operating equipment, Glazov says. A Chicago real estate lawyer whose life revolves around skydiving, Glazov says becoming a tandem jumpmaster last fall was a way to "share the thrill with others and bring new people into the sport." Though diabetes doesn't preclude skydiving per se, Glazov's category requires an airman's Class 3 medical certificate, verifying that his diabetes is well controlled.

His own entry into the sport was spur of the moment. Devastated when his dream of

becoming an Air Force or Navy pilot was dashed at age 15 with the diagnosis of Type 1 diabetes, Glazov admits to being rudderless through most of his undergraduate years at George Washington University. He's not even sure what prompted him, but one day he called a drop zone (designated area for skydiving) in southern Maryland and signed up for a class.

It was an "I'm going to show you" kind of move, he recalls. "It looked like a good thrill, something that would be cool." Unfor-

tunately, bad weather interfered with his first two trips, but on his third try he made an accelerated free fall. Although a jumpmaster is on either side of you, in this case all three open their own chutes. It was a flawless first dive. "Up until the time I left the aircraft, it was the most frightening experience of my life," Glazov says. "Once you've jumped clear, it becomes the most liberating feeling you'll ever have. You've left everything behind."

It took just a few jumps before he was hooked. "And then I could not stop. The world revolved around skydiving, and everything I did was geared to getting me to the next jump," he says. "It's a massive adrenaline fix. When you sky dive, you are going to the edge."

At the drop zone outside of Chicago, Glazov keeps a trailer with a small refrigerator stocked with everything he needs for his diabetes. "You steal a few moments to check your blood sugar and grab something to eat, run to the next aircraft, and while you're onboard, wolf it down," he explains. He uses

an insulin pen and tries to test before every flight. "Like anything else, you learn how to manage it." But he makes no bones about diabetes complicating the issue. "You know, instead of juggling three or four balls, you're juggling six."

Glazov has also competed with a formation diving team and is now considering moving to the next level—accelerated free fall jumpmaster. "It's certainly given me a reason to be alive," he says. "It definitely puts life in a different focus."

Josh Glazov's mom, Sheila Glazov, is a storyteller

whose first work, *Princess Shayna's Invisible Visible Gift*, is a children's book for the whole family. The story of a princess with diabetes, its message is that no one is perfect and people should be accepted for themselves and their values. "The point is to read it with your child, so they can find out how you're feeling, what you're thinking," she says. The idea for her next book, *The Kid and the Cat*, came from the experiences of her son Josh and the family's old cat, when both developed and coped with Type 1 diabetes. Also forthcoming is a sequel to *Princess Shayna*, *The Search for the Silver Scepter*. And hopefully, a book with Josh called *I Can Still Fly*, for teenagers. Glazov donated some of the proceeds from her first story to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International.