

# An Open Mind

by **Marco Aizawa**

2011 was a year of exploration for me; I enjoyed the experiences of learning to cope with my type 1 diabetes through exercise like running and cycling, travelling to Japan and China, and, lastly, completing my second marathon with good blood sugar levels. You could say I made it to the finish line with a solid record!

How is your journey with diabetes? Have you found it a tough, mundane or tedious task to keep sugars in check and your Hba1c (average level of blood sugars for a period of time) at a good level?

Everyone has a different journey with diabetes. Although I have lived with diabetes for 16 years, I still feel I have much more to learn. So, I signed up for a few sessions with dietitians from Khoo Teck Phuat Hospital to try to control my blood sugars better.

The sessions included carbohydrates counting, knowing how one unit of insulin will bring down your blood sugars, how much to cut down on my insulin before I exercise and prepare for marathons. Some parts of the sessions felt like a refresher course and some parts were fresh and new. Both were very helpful and I felt it gave me a renewed confidence in achieving my goals for 2012.

After the knowledge comes the application. I am still trying to master what knowledge and skills I picked up, but they have benefited me tremendously in a myriad of situations. Whether it is something as simple as going out to eat with friends or as gruelling as preparing for a big game or race, I am able to make the necessary adjustments and not have to fret about the outcome or whether I am going to enjoy the experience.

Diabetes management is not just about me, because it not only affects me, but also my family, friends, and even colleagues. By improving my diabetes management, I can still enjoy life and not be afraid of trying new things and setting higher goals. My family and friends need not worry about whether I can cope with my day to day routine or even the rigours of my sporting activities. They have peace of mind and so do I.

So, start 2012 with an open mind. You never know how it can open doors to many new and exciting opportunities!