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### Richard King Mellon Foundation

What factors influence how well a teenager with Type 1 diabetes sticks to a medical regimen? Dianne Palladino, a first-year Ph.D. student in Carnegie Mellon's Social and Health Psychology program, is working to find the answer.

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## Improving Quality of Life

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Palladino is able to conduct this kind of research thanks to a \$25 million gift for a Life Sciences Competitiveness Fund from The Richard King Mellon Foundation. A significant portion of the gift — \$10 million — created an endowed fund to support graduate students like Palladino. Selected students receive a one-year stipend and are designated Presidential Fellows in the Life Sciences.



"The faculty in my department have a wide range of expertise in my field, and they have been instrumental in helping to increase my knowledge and to build my research focus," said Palladino. "My department provides an atmosphere of intellectual freedom and inquiry that I feel is important for my development as an independent investigator."

Brian Ziebart is studying predictive models of human behavior and decision-making thanks to the same Foundation gift. Ziebart is researching what he calls better "brains" for GPS devices, ones that enable automatic personalization of routing.

"For example, the device observes that my grandfather avoids high-speed roads and so it personalizes his future route recommendations to do likewise," Ziebart explained. "I am also working toward predictive information delivery, for example, the device warns you about an accident along a typical route you take home even if you don't tell your GPS your destination and route."

Ziebart and his advisors have created a company — called [NavPrescience](#) — to bring this technology to consumers.

Ziebart says coursework and research in the School of Computer Science's Machine Learning Department has helped him to develop a strong set of technical skills.

In addition, being part of the Quality of Life Technology Engineering Research Center has exposed him to a number of important assistive technology problems where the successful application of those skills can make a difference in people's lives.

"Hopefully this combination will lead to a future career filled with equally interesting and important challenges," Ziebart said.

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