

# Advocate & Ambassador

## Table leader: Staci P.

My husband and I live with our two children and two dogs in Newton, KS. I am an Occupational Therapist and have worked with patients battling arthritis all of my 17 years as a therapist. When my daughter was 9 years old she was diagnosed with Polyarticular Juvenile Arthritis. JA has had a huge impact on our lives, both good and bad.

We attended our first JA conference in 2012 at St. Louis looking to build relationships and to find support in our daily battle with JA. What a blessing it was for us! After attending the advocacy presentation both my husband and I felt that this was an area that we could be a part of and do something. Advocacy makes me feel like I am on the front lines battling this beast and spreading the word that kids get arthritis too! I am an ambassador and won the platinum ambassador award at the Advocacy Summit this past March.

## Tips to take home

- NEVER assume that the person you are talking to knows anything about JA
- ALWAYS make your information personal and tell your story
- Statistics help but mostly the political leaders just want to hear what we as people affected by JA have to say
- Just keep on keeping on. Many times it feels like I am getting nowhere but I just have to keep on keeping on and have faith that I'm making a difference.

## Want to get involved?

- Become an Advocate for the Arthritis Foundation. This is super easy! Once you sign up the foundation will send you email alerts about once a month via email. All that you do is read the alert. If you agree with what they are saying, then you sign your name and press send. After that, your message is sent to your elected official.
- Become an Arthritis Ambassador with the Arthritis Foundation. This requires you to be on a teleconference call for an hour every other month. You can either be on the call live or you can listen to a recording of the call at a time of your convenience. These calls are times where we are told about what is happening in Washington with the AF and healthcare in general. At the end of each call the ambassadors are given assignments to complete. Frequently the assignments include calling or emailing your elected official's Washington office.
- Contact your local Arthritis Foundation and ask how you can help with advocacy in your area and at local events
- Just be willing to talk with anyone about JA and educate your friends, family, neighbors, coworkers, Facebook friends, church members, and anyone else! The more people that we tell about JA, the more awareness we can bring to this beast we call JA!

## Challenge:

Please get started with advocacy by signing up so be an E-Advocate at the Arthritis Foundation table here at JA Conference or by going to [www.arthritis.org/advocacy](http://www.arthritis.org/advocacy).