



**Evansville, Indiana**

**Brooke Allen**

**2013 Jingle Bell Run/Walk Honoree**

Brooke is the 12 year old daughter of Tim and Carolyn Allen, and big sister to Nick. She is very active and energetic and loves playing with her dog, Maggie. Brooke and Nick enjoy riding dirt bikes, and much of her time is spent practicing for the sports she loves to play, basketball and softball. Her beautiful smile gives no hint to what lies just beneath the surface.

It was the fall of 2011 when Brooke was playing in a softball tournament in Terre Haute that she noticed it was hard to grip her bat and throw the ball. The cool weather also made her feel achy. After several doctors' appointments and one unnecessary hand surgery, she was referred to Riley Children's Hospital to see Pediatric Rheumatologist, Dr. Peter Chira who diagnosed her with juvenile rheumatoid arthritis (JRA).

Feeling the effects of JRA in almost every joint of her body, Brooke had some difficulty understanding what was wrong, and how she was supposed to feel. Taking medicine every day was new for her, and getting shots twice a week is not something she looks forward to; but she has started to feel so much better, and she realizes how much the medications helps her. She still plays basketball and softball, and she has even learned how to hit left handed which eases the sting and vibration on her right hand. When asked about her thoughts on living with arthritis Brooke said, "It's amazing what you can do if you are determined, after all arthritis is something I have, it's not who I am!"

Way to go Brooke! We are thrilled to have this courageous young lady as the 2012 Jingle Bell Run/Walk Honoree.

#### **About the Arthritis Foundation**

The Arthritis Foundation ([www.arthritis.org](http://www.arthritis.org)) is committed to raising awareness and reducing the unacceptable impact of arthritis, which strikes one in every five adults and 300,000 children, and is the nation's leading cause of disability. To conquer this painful, debilitating disease, we support education, research, advocacy and other vital programs and services