



Kathleen Thomas, DO
2013 Jingle Bell Run/Walk Medical Honoree
Indianapolis, Indiana

Dr. Kathleen Thomas is a board-certified rheumatologist at Community Health Network in Noblesville. She treats more than 1,000 people with differing forms of arthritis and related disorders of the joints, muscles, and bones.

But she didn't always want to be a rheumatologist. Dr. Thomas started out with the hopes of becoming a dermatologist. "I was struck early on by how female dominant autoimmune diseases are," Dr. Thomas recalls. "These diseases affect women during their child bearing years, which are a critical time in a woman's life. I wanted to be an advocate for the millions of women living with chronic pain."

Dr. Thomas is a Pittsburgh native who completed her undergraduate studies in Pennsylvania. She and her husband, an anesthesiologist, moved to Indiana in 2001 to complete their residencies at Ball Memorial Hospital and their fellowships at the IU School of Medicine. She has been with Community Rheumatology since 2008.

"It's a good time to be in rheumatology and a good time to have arthritis," Dr. Thomas says. "Thanks to advances in research and medicine, we now have great treatments and the disease is manageable. We can do things now that we couldn't before."

Dr. Thomas battles the myths and misconceptions of arthritis on a daily basis. "People think of arthritis as an old person's disease, but many autoimmune diseases affect the whole age spectrum," Dr. Thomas says. "Symptoms can be subtle or quite explosive and people will try to rationalize away the pain or treat themselves. But early diagnosis and treatment are key to getting good control."

Dr. Thomas helps patients dial in their medical treatment, but also preaches the importance of what she calls "self-management skills." These skills are lifestyle changes that can help patients better control their pain – things like a healthy diet, plenty of sleep and regular exercise.

Dr. Thomas' office has participated in the Jingle Bell Run for the past seven years raising close to \$3,500 for arthritis research and education. "It's a great way to be involved with my patients outside the office," Dr. Thomas says. "Plus I know the Arthritis Foundation does great work in terms of educating people about the disease and providing them with the recourses they need to manage their care."

Dr. Thomas is a member of the American College of Rheumatology. She lives in Fishers and spends her free time exercising and cheering on her favorite sports teams.

The Arthritis Foundation is proud to have Dr. Kathleen Thomas as the 2013 Jingle Bell Run/Walk Medical Honoree.

About the Arthritis Foundation

The Arthritis Foundation (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.