



Jake Tharp
2013 Jingle Bell Run/Walk Youth Honoree
Springfield, Missouri

Ten year old Jake Tharp is one of the 300,000 children in the United States with juvenile arthritis (JA). At the time of his first appointment with his pediatric rheumatologist, Jake was unable to get out of bed in the mornings without being carried. He couldn't use his hands or fingers to accomplish everyday tasks, like holding a spoon or turning a door knob. He had tremendous pain and swelling in several joints.

Jake was just 6 years old when he was diagnosed with Polyarticular Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis. With the help of his rheumatologist, Jake has been able to return to a more normal, everyday life. He is still on medication to help with his JA, and uses several techniques he has learned through physical therapy to help alleviate his pain and discomfort. He is now able to participate in his favorite activities; basketball, baseball and golf. He also loves to play with his dog Stanley, pictured here with him.

Jake has participated in the Jingle Bell Run/Walk for several years, always determined to help raise money and awareness regarding JA. He is our hero and inspiration. It is because of Jake, and kids like him, that we do what we do here at the Arthritis Foundation. We are proud to honor Jake Tharp as the 2013 Jingle Bell Run/Walk Youth 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.