



Jacen Heafner
2014 Jingle in July
Youth Honoree
Kansas City, MO

Meet Jingle in July Youth Honoree, Jacen Heafner!

Jacen was faced with a sudden onset of uveitis when he was just four years old. His diagnosis process was long and it took a while for doctors to diagnose him with juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA), with chronic uveitis. Now, Jacen is 11 years old and would like to be able to play football. His doctors and parents encouraged him to find a less impactful sport, so Jacen has grown to love martial arts and even has a black belt in Krav Maga! Jacen really enjoys martial arts and sees how it helps control his arthritis. He went on to say, "Martial arts has helped me stay flexible and moving."

Jacen wants to be a chemist when he grows up so he can help find a cure for arthritis. Right now, he enjoys meeting other kids with arthritis and showing them that having arthritis does not have to control you. Jacen's hope for the future is that, "One day we will find a cure and children will not have to suffer from arthritis."

We are proud to honor Jacen for his courage and bravery, and we are thrilled to recognize him as the 2014 Jingle in July Youth Honoree.

About Jingle in July

Jingle in July, a 5K run/walk fundraiser for the Arthritis Foundation, is part of the Jingle Bell Run series. Participants are provided with jingle bells to tie to their shoelaces and are encouraged to dress in holiday attire – yes, even in July! All participants and their family members are eligible for steeply discounted prices to Worlds of Fun. Visit www.JingleinJuly.org to learn more and to register.

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.