

# Arthritis Walk®



[www.arthritiswalk.org](http://www.arthritiswalk.org)



## **Arthritis Walk Youth Honoree**

**Olivia Neitzel**

**Chicago, IL**

Olivia's beautiful smile gives no hint of the challenges she has experienced since being diagnosed with Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (JIA) in the second grade. There have been ups and downs, but today Olivia is doing pretty well. Although she suffers from frequent swelling, she remains determined to live an active lifestyle.

Olivia has difficulty with zippers and buttons, and caps and bottles. Activities like rock climbing, push-ups, hand stands and running have also been problematic. Despite these challenges, Olivia is dancing once again. After being diagnosed with JIA, Olivia had to give up her precious dancing. Today, she is back in the dance studio 5 days a week and says, "It feels great to push through the pain." Olivia was recently accepted into the prestigious and intense, Inaside Chicago Dance – Youth Trainee Program.

This 13 year old, 7<sup>th</sup> grader's free time is filled with dance, hanging out with friends and writing stories. Language is her favorite subject in school, and she is also active in the choir and poms. She has a strong family support system that includes her parents, Chris and Krista, her brother Scott and sister Kara. Olivia would really like to have a cat to join her dogs Charlie and Bobo, and countless fish.

When asked about her future plans, Olivia said, "Like every dancer I dream to go to Joffrey or Juilliard. But, realistically I'd like to study dance or work with special needs kids." She went on to say, "I want to inspire people and let them know that pain doesn't define you and you can chase your dreams no matter what."

Olivia's strength and determination make us proud to honor her as the 2013 Chicago Arthritis Walk Youth 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.