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**Contact: EMILY PEARCE
Arthritis Foundation
501-708-2917
epearce@arthritis.org**

**ARTHRITIS FOUNDATION SAYS YES TO ARKANSAS GIRL
ATTENDING 31ST ANNUAL JUVENILE ARTHRITIS CONFERENCE**

Little Rock, AR – May, 2015 – The Arthritis Foundation is celebrating Arthritis Awareness Month this May by providing sponsorships to kids around the nation attending the 31st annual National Juvenile Arthritis (JA) Conference, held July 23-26 in Orlando, FL.

Nine-year-old Kenedi McCoy from Springdale, AR, is among this year's Arthritis Foundation sponsorship recipients. She'll be traveling with her parents and two sisters to the 2015 conference, which helps kids living with arthritis and their families learn more about how to take control of JA and live like kids should through arthritis education, programs and treatments. The conference also lets kids affected by arthritis meet other children dealing with the same obstacles – and it gives families the chance to develop lifelong connections within the JA community.

“We are incredibly excited to have Kenedi and her family join us at the 31st annual JA Conference,” says Emily Pearce, program and services director for the Arthritis Foundation's Arkansas area. “While Kenedi was only diagnosed recently with arthritis, she has been battling a severe form of the disease for several years. Thanks to the sponsorship program, the entire McCoy family can now make in-

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person connections with Arthritis Foundation volunteers and staff who are dedicated to helping kids like Kenedi. It's always exciting to see newly-diagnosed families build these much-needed relationships, and we are so thrilled to give this opportunity to the McCoys."

Kenedi was diagnosed last year with several forms of arthritis, and will be attending the JA Conference for the first time this summer. After years of misdiagnosis, hospital stays and pain, Kenedi and her family are eager to meet others who understand their journey and learn more about how the Arthritis Foundation is fighting for kids living with juvenile arthritis.

"It has been an extremely hard, frustrating and unsure journey, but rewarding at the same time," says Tonya McCoy, Kenedi's mother. "We have watched our once weak, sad and unhealthy little girl blossom over this last year. Her smile has returned. She tries to boldly do as much as her body will allow her to do, even doing things she couldn't before, like bike-riding with her sisters. We are grateful for how far she has come, and we have faith that she will continue to grow and prosper."

The Arthritis Foundation's JA Conference will give Kenedi and her family the opportunity to learn more about her disease. Along with hundreds of others, they will see firsthand how other families cope with the stresses of juvenile arthritis and other forms of the disease, as well as hear from leading experts on the newest treatments.

"May is Arthritis Awareness Month, and we can think of no better way of celebrating than inviting the hundreds of thousands of children living with arthritis to join us for our annual Juvenile Arthritis Conference," says Pearce. "While a

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diagnosis of JA can seem overwhelming, and at times daunting, a visit to the JA Conference can help affected kids and families understand that they are not alone. The Arthritis Foundation and their community are working to help every kid say Yes to childhood and live well, no matter their diagnosis."

About the Arthritis Foundation

The Arthritis Foundation is the Champion of Yes. Leading the fight for the arthritis community, the Foundation helps conquer everyday battles through life-changing information and resources, access to optimal care, advancements in science and community connections. The Arthritis Foundation's goal is to chart a winning course, guiding families in developing personalized plans for living a full life – and making each day another stride towards a cure. The Foundation also publishes *Arthritis Today*, the award-winning magazine that reaches 4.2 million readers.

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