



California Coast Classic Youth Honoree

Kaylee Sikes, 10 years old

Day 1: San Francisco, CA

Kaylee was diagnosed with Polyarticular Idiopathic Arthritis when she was 4 years old. What started out as one swollen knee turned into multiple swollen joints and a 3 day stay at UCSF Children's Hospital. After trying many medications that did not work she started Actemra IV infusions every 2 weeks. She also has to take pills daily. Right now she is doing great and the medications seem to be working! She was even able to go from infusions every 2 weeks to every 3 weeks! She has had her ups and downs dealing with pain, stiffness and nausea from her medications. She is a tough girl and takes all of this like a champ! We feel blessed that the medications are working to control her arthritis for now!



Kaylee has lived more than half her life with arthritis. She used to be scared and frustrated because of her disease but the older she gets the more comfortable she gets with talking about it and trying to spread awareness. She is the Captain of the Kaylee's Krew Walk to Cure team, which raises money every year for the Arthritis Foundation! She heads up a bake sale and helps organize garage sales and dine and donates. She has spoken to her class and a Girl Scout Troop about her disease and confidently answers everyone's questions. She has come a long way in the last year and who knows how her arthritis will be in a year from now but she stays positive and enjoys participating in the fun camps and the conferences the Arthritis Foundation offers!

She hopes and prays for a cure one day soon so that she and others with this disease can live a life without pain, stiffness and medications!

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Visit Donation Page: Kaylee Sikes

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California Coast Classic Youth Honoree

Mia Brees, 13 years old

Day 1: Santa Cruz, CA

Mia Brees was diagnosed at age 6 with ANA+ (can affect the eyes) oligoarthritis, and more recently enthesitis-related arthritis. Now at 13, she has lived more than half her life with arthritis, with seemingly no end in sight, but most who know her say that she seems to be doing just fine. She is a true trooper! However, for Mia to "seem fine" takes the help of several medications. Methotrexate (a chemo drug) must be taken weekly as well as Zofran to counteract the possible nausea and vomiting from the Methotrexate. She must also be injected with Humira every 11 days, a painful (she always complains that "It feels like shards of broken glass going in") and immensely expensive shot that costs about \$1,720 each. Since the last CCC, Mia has had to withstand 33 more painful shots and the family has had to deal with the \$57,000 bill, but fortunately, the family's insurance covers the majority of the cost. Adding more to the list, she takes countless Motrin and has to constantly visit her Rheumatologist to give 5-6 tubes of blood to make sure the medications aren't damaging her kidneys, liver, and the rest of her body. Although, these medications may help her now, they do put her at risk for other health problems in the future, such as cancer.



She might limp at times or on the rare occasion, crawl up the stairs in her home, but she "seems fine" and arthritis has never stopped her from achieving her goals and dreams and being a true Champion of Yes. You would rarely see her complain about the hardship she faces and never uses her illness as an excuse for anything. With this positive attitude, Mia is excelling in school and is passionate about playing basketball on the middle school basketball team in hopes of continuing her career during high school. She even earned an A+ in PE.

The Brees family is very thankful for the Arthritis Foundation for it has been instrumental in helping Mia and her family during the last few years through family education days, advocacy opportunities, juvenile arthritis conferences, and her favorite, Camp Milagros. They were so involved that Mia's parents rode in the 2013 and 2014 CCC event, her aunt Cathy and her mother participated in the 2-day option in 2012, and Mia herself also volunteered in 2014. It is too bad that they could not ride in with their group—Team Sluggy—again this year, but that does not mean the fun stops there. The Brees family hopes to ride again in the CCC tour in the future and also look forward to taking part in the

Arthritis Foundation's other exciting events for years to come!

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California Coast Classic Youth Honoree

Kayleigh Springer, 13 years old

Day 2: Monterey, CA

Kayleigh Springer is 13 years old and an 8th grader at San Benancio Middle School who was diagnosed with Oligoarticular Arthritis when she was just 15 months old and was re-diagnosed when Polyarticular Arthritis because her arthritis was in all of her joints in her fingers, toes, knees, ankles, and elbows. She does not remember a life without Arthritis, and for that reason, it has become part of her family's life. There are weekly injections; fatigue, chronic joint pain and the medicine making her feel sick, but Kayleigh is doing very well right now and has medication that works very well for her.



Her interests and extracurricular include playing softball as the pitcher and center field, participating in the 4-H, raising lamb, and organizing children's activities at the JA Education Day in Pacific Grove. Even with her busy schedule, she is a very active volunteer for the local Arthritis Foundation Board and finds time to also volunteer in the children's activities at the Arthritis Foundation's Jingle Bell Run/Walk in her hometown. She is enthusiastic about going to Camp Milagros every summer to spend time with other children that share the same difficulties that she faces as a young girl. Kayleigh is also active in campaigning in political affairs. Every year, she goes to Sacramento and advocates for better health care for people with chronic diseases. One time, she was able to go to Washington D.C. to urge the U.S. representatives to support cheaper health care bills. On the National level, Kayleigh has been participating at the JA conferences, a very important part of her life where she has made friends from all over the country that also suffer from Arthritis. After her first conference at Hershey, Pennsylvania she has said that "she finally felt normal, that other kids have arthritis too."

The Arthritis Foundation has been a very influential and positive part of her family's life. This is why the Springer family is so thankful for the participants who chose to be involved in the CCC and fundraised for the Arthritis Foundation.

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California Coast Classic Youth Honoree

Izabella Espinoza, 10 years old

Day 3: Big Sur, CA

Izabella Espinoza was born January 23, 2006. As soon as Bella could walk she was constantly on the go: never stopping for a minute as happy as she could be. She has always been such an active child, always wanting to learn something new. As she grew older she started playing sports and found talent in softball and swimming. Basketball and gymnastics are also other sports she loves. But even so, fast pitch softball was Bella's favorite as she played shortstop and 1st base. In 2013 Bella had just finished an awesome season playing her first time in fastpitch softball. Soon thereafter, Bella's wrist was noticeably and rapidly deforming. After many doctor visits and tests, Izabella was diagnosed with Rheumatoid Arthritis. Bella not only had all the classic signs of the illness, but her genes also tested positive for R.A.



This was not only a big shock. This was very discouraging news to Bella and her family. Bella was sad that she had to quit all these sports in order to heal her wrist that had rapidly deformed. Nevertheless, Bella has fought hard to rehabilitate herself. With the help of new medicines and great doctors, she has been able to gain motion almost 100% in her wrist. Thanks to her physical therapist and Dr. Parsa alongside her medical team, Bella and her family has been able to cope with this disease. This year Bella is well enough to return to playing sports, and although, she's not physically ready for fastpitch softball, she is excited to try cheerleading for the first time.



Her recent summer session at The Painted Turtle has given Bella so much happiness, hope, confidence, and most importantly, inspiration. Her dream is to one day be a counselor at the Painted Turtle with aspirations to encourage and inspire other kids who struggle with R.A. She also hopes that one day she will be able to go into remission with this disease. As long as Bella continues fighting the family has a lot of hope for her. For Izabella, the sky is the limit.

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California Coast Classic Youth Honoree

Andrew Toole, 15 years old

Day 4: Cambria, CA

Andrew Toole was diagnosed with JA & Uveitis when he was 3 years old. For the past 12 years, he has learned how to maintain his health and keep his body strong to fight against the disease. He is going into his Sophomore year at Atascadero High School not being able to play sports his school years, but Andrew has learned to be involved in other things that do not highly impact his joints. His passion is downhill Mountain Biking and racing his bike, and he loves staying active outside.



During his free time, he volunteers for Parents for Joy which raises money for special needs children to have a playground. He enjoys showing pigs to his 4-H group and loves to lead them. Ocean fishing and hunting with his dad and brother, camping, and riding his dirt bike are his favorite things to do. His family makes a 6-hour round trip to see his Doctors in Stanford whom they are so thankful for.

Andrew serves as an awesome example to many with Arthritis by maintaining a positive attitude and working around the disease instead of simply dwelling on what he cannot do. This last year, Andrew was been a part of the 504 plan and has learned how to educate his counselor and teachers about JA; many of his educators did not have any idea how kids developed arthritis. Currently, Andrew is looking into purchasing a 72 Chevy or an older Ford truck that he can restore with his dad to be his first car.

His family actively supports the Arthritis Foundation, and Andrew, as a true hero, vows to fight the disease, not let it take over his life, and spread awareness to those around the world!

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California Coast Classic Youth Honoree

Erin Mahan, 17 years old

Day 6: Buellton, CA

Erin Mahan is a senior at Dos Pueblos High School. She was diagnosed with Ankylosing Spondylitis about a year and a half ago, a few weeks before her 16th birthday. About three years ago, she was playing water polo and tore part of her hip, resulting in a surgery a year later. Several months after the surgery, she began to have trouble breathing, so she met with several doctors who could not figure out what was wrong, but it was determined that it was not a complication of surgery. After that, the pain began to spread into the rest of her joints, and the next few months were spent in physical therapy. Finally, she met with a pediatric rheumatologist, Dr. Parsa, who quickly diagnosed her. She went on all kinds of medications and had to try several biologics. Currently, she is receiving Remicade infusions every six weeks.



Although she just began this treatment, it seems to be helping her pain. Besides medication, she does acupuncture, chiropractics, physical therapy, and tries to maintain a healthy diet so she can be in the best position to challenge the pain.

Erin has missed a lot of school due to the pain. She has trouble getting out bed most days and sitting in a classroom can sometimes be intolerable. Her school has been incredibly accommodating towards her disease, for her counselor helped her get a 504 plan and has personally administrated several ACT test sessions. Her teachers also assist her with make-up work; they keep in contact through email and lunchtime meetings so her education does not suffer.

She attended her first year of arthritis camp this summer and wants to thank the Arthritis Foundation for giving her this amazing opportunity. Erin says she met some amazing people who experience similar health issues as herself, and she found it inspiring to see how strong the other members of the community were in the fight against Arthritis. She is so thankful for all the support she has gotten from the Arthritis community, as well as her friends and family.

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Visit Donation Page: Erin Mahan

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California Coast Classic Youth Honoree

Liliana Lara, 15 years old

Day 7: Ventura, CA

Liliana Lara was diagnosed with Polyarticular Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis and Uveitis when she was 8-years-old. Her symptoms began with swelling and pain in the joints of her hands when she was in second grade. By that summer, her parents noticed that she was limping throughout the day and having difficulty running. Liliana visited her local pediatrician who immediately recognized the signs of Juvenile Arthritis and scheduled x-rays, blood work, and a referral to UCLA Pediatric Rheumatology. A course of medications, physical therapy, and occupational therapy began immediately. There continues to be ups and downs along the way, but Liliana maintains a positive attitude and does not let arthritis get in the way of doing the things she loves.



Liliana has been a dancer since she was two-years-old and now participates on a competitive dance team at the studio where she first started taking classes. She is also a member of the JV cheer team, beginning her second year as a sophomore in the fall.

Liliana was introduced to the Painted Turtle summer camp in 2012. She has made unforgettable friendships and memories at the camp. The Painted Turtle has helped Liliana realize that she is not the only kid struggling with this disease. She was able to reconnect with her friends and the camp staff again this year at the Painted Turtle and was very happy to do so.

The support of the Arthritis Foundation, family, and friends have been invaluable in providing information, compassion, and understanding that keep Liliana and her family moving forward and staying positive. Liliana participates in the Arthritis Foundation fundraising events throughout the year to support the foundation's important work.

Liliana's family's hope for the future is the complete remission for Liliana and all children who are diagnosed with Juvenile Arthritis.

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Visit Donation Page: Liliana Lara





California Coast Classic Youth Honoree

Shoshana Nagibi, 12 years old

Day 8: Los Angeles, CA

Shoshana Nagibi was 1 ½ years old when she was diagnosed with Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis. At the time, her family did not know children could develop arthritis but soon learned that over 300,000 children did. Three years later, she developed an eye disease called Uveitis which could cause blindness. Juvenile arthritis is different than the adult form. In Shoshie's case, it attacks most of her joints, fingers, knees, and her elbows being the most painful. Shoshie lives her life with daily chronic pain from the time she wakes up to the time she goes to bed. Humidity and cold make it even worse. She has had infusions, weekly painful shots, daily medicine, chemo, months in a wheelchair and the inability to do most things children should do easily like button their jeans, brush their hair, or use a fork. It is difficult for a 12-year-old to be different from all the other children at school and now that she is a teen, kids are not the same as they were before.



Nonetheless, Shoshana continues to thrive. She is a brilliant anime artist and has sold 3 paintings. When her mom asks her if it is difficult to draw every day she answers "Well, of course, it does, Mom. I have arthritis!" and continues to draw anyway. Her enthusiasm is infectious and has empathy for everyone. She makes friends wherever she goes. Many do not understand that she is an old soul in a young girl's



body because she has been through more medical obstacles than most adults will ever experience through their entire lives. Shoshie loves school, her friends, anime, music, art, dancing, and video games. She will not let arthritis bring her down and thanks everyone for helping to raise money for research for a cure for juvenile arthritis.

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