



**Amanda Lovejoy**  
**2014 Jingle Bell Run/Walk**  
**Youth Honoree**  
**Ames, IA**

Amanda Lovejoy is a sweet, caring and conscientious 13 year old. She has a very special bond with her fraternal twin brother, Connor. As toddlers, when they were not talking to each other in their own language, they would be conspiring with each other on how to get out of their cribs.

Amanda was always a good sleeper, so at two years old, when she started taking longer naps and putting herself to bed at night, her parents saw it as a blessing, not that something might be wrong. Slowly, over the course of a couple of months her parents noticed how often Amanda would trip or fall. One minute she would be walking beside her mother, the next she was on the ground. She was having a harder time getting up off the floor and climbing into and out of bed. While Connor was full of energy, Amanda was content to stay in her stroller, or be held. Then one night, Amanda sat at the bottom of the stairs and cried, because she wanted to be carried to her room.

After discussing Amanda's behavior, her parents decided to call her pediatrician. Their pediatrician tried to reassure them that there was no reason to be worried, that Amanda was probably just looking for a little attention. To ease their fears, he agreed to have blood drawn.

After a few days, Amanda's dad called about the blood work. Her dad knew something was wrong, when the doctor paused while looking over the results. Their doctor quickly said that he needed to get a second opinion and would call him back. Things moved very quickly from that day on. Amanda was sent to a neurologist, who in turn recommended a rheumatologist. Without wasting time with scheduling an initial consultation, their rheumatologist set up a needle biopsy. The family met their rheumatologist for the first time in the recovery room. Their doctor did not need the results of the biopsy, the diagnosis was juvenile dermatomyositis.

From that day on the Lovejoy family has learned to be more flexible, and willing to adjust to change. Amanda started daily oral medication and weekly shots to bring the disease under control and into remission. A few years later, after a relapse, Amanda needed a PICC line and then it was recommended that Amanda have a port catheter, which has made monthly infusions and blood work much more feasible.

Through everything, the family considers themselves extremely lucky. They were living in Connecticut when Amanda first became ill. All of her doctors worked well together and went out of their way to get Amanda a quick diagnosis and on an immediate treatment plan.

Nowadays, Amanda travels to St Paul, Minnesota to visit her rheumatologist. They not only have a wonderful Children's Center to visit, but the Mall of America is only 15 minutes away from the center. After a thorough appointment with their doctor, they get to visit one of Amanda's favorite places, the mall!

Amanda has shown extreme bravery and courage in meeting the challenges of juvenile dermatomyositis, and we are thrilled to recognize her as the 2014 Jingle Bell Run/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.