



**Kelly Ann Pierce**  
**2015 Jingle Bell Run/Walk**  
**Adult Honoree**  
**Chicago, IL**

Since being diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) at the age of 15, Kelly said, "I have good days and bad days." Winter always seems to be harder for Kelly to cope with, versus the summer months. She recalls that her diagnosis was very hard, "I was 15-years-old and I had to stop doing the things I loved because of the pain. I went to school four times a week because my meds made me sick."

Despite the difficulties of living with RA, Kelly remains optimistic, "If there is something I want to try I go for it! I am proud to say I have not let this disease take over my life. I participated in the Jingle Bell Run/Walk and I thought that I might not be able to do it, but I did; I may have been the last person to cross the finish line but I did it!"

Kelly has been on steroids for the past 25 years and they have taken their toll. Her skin is very thin and her bones are brittle. She has to be careful in everything she does because she can get hurt very easily. The slightest touch can leave her bruised, or even tear open her skin.

Kelly stays as active as possible, and although she is no longer an Irish dancer, having to give it up after 10 years due to the pain it caused in her knees, she still enjoys traveling and tries to take at least two trips a year. Kelly and her husband are big hockey fans and they love attending Chicago Blackhawks games.

When asked about her hopes for the future Kelly replied, "My hope for the future is that a cure will be found for RA and that I will not have to take 10 pills a day, or go to the hospital every month for an IV, or have another surgery."

Kelly wants to spread the word about arthritis, and let people know, "Arthritis affects people of all ages, young and old".

We are thrilled to recognize Kelly for her determination and will to fight against the odds. It is with great pride that we salute her as the 2015 Jingle Bell Run/Walk adult 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.