



Avry Gray
2013 Jingle Bell Run/Walk
River Valley, IL

Avry Gray was diagnosed with juvenile rheumatoid arthritis (JRA) in 2011, when she was just five years old. Following her diagnosis she had a really rough time. Avry had to endure steroid injections, (three to date) and a series of medications to find out which one worked best for her. Her mom, Jessica Gray feels lucky that Avry is able to tolerate the oral medication Methotrexate, and does not have to have repeated injections.

Avry's bravery doesn't stop there; her gait, muscle weakness from knee swelling and pain meant a year of grueling physical therapy. Today, Avry has persevered and is doing well on her medication, and has not suffered a flare in months.

Despite her JRA, Avry is very active. She enjoys playing outside, riding her bike, swimming and playing with her dolls. She also enjoys softball and soccer. Although she had to give up her ballet and tap lessons due to flares in her foot and ankle, she refuses to let arthritis win. Avry said, "I have arthritis, but it doesn't have me!"

Avry is little sister to big brother Payton, and has two dogs, Moose and Stewie. Her favorite subject in school is math, but she admits "recess is more fun!" When asked about her plans for the future Avry said, "I would like to be a teacher and grow up and be able to do whatever I want to do, arthritis free."

Her parents, Ryan and Jessica Gray shared, "The Arthritis Foundation helped our family find a physical therapist that was child friendly." Avry added that she enjoys being a part of the Jingle Bell Run/Walk because she wants people to know, "arthritis isn't just an old persons disease, kids get it too!"

The Arthritis Foundation is proud of the courage that Avry has shown, and we are honored to have her as the 2013 Jingle Bell Run/Walk youth honoree.

About the Arthritis Foundation

The Arthritis Foundation (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.