



Delaney
Arthritis Walk Honoree
Des Moines, IA

Delaney was just 6 years old when she woke up one morning and tried to get out of bed and couldn't walk. She was diagnosed with Pauciarticular Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (JIA) in her left foot and right hip joints in December, 2009. By the following summer her JIA had spread throughout her body to both hips, both feet, her shoulders, neck and right hand.

Delaney's JIA treatment plan is being led by Pediatric Rheumatologist, Dr. Polly Ferguson at the University of Iowa Children's Hospital. Dr. Ferguson has been extremely accommodating in helping Delaney understand what is going on with her joints, and why she is experiencing so much pain and fatigue. Dr. Ferguson has helped Delaney understand the importance of her weekly shot, and why wearing the proper shoes are critical for her condition. Delaney's medical regimen also includes a weekly oral chemotherapy medication.

Masking the pain of her JIA often becomes too much to bear for this brave 3rd grader. Her classmates and school staff are great supporters and they are always willing to lend a helping hand when Delaney is having a difficult day. By using bigger pencils and modified scissors the task of learning is made easier on the joints of her fingers. There are days when moving is tough because of the pain and stiffness in her knees and hips. Pool and gym therapy at Iowa's Child Serve helps Delaney build her endurance, and keep fatigue at bay.

Delaney remains active with her favorite pastime, the Irish Dance. Upon learning of her diagnosis, Delaney worried she would have to give up dancing; but it was Dr. Ferguson who gave her two thumbs up and said, "When it hurts the most, you need to move the most." Delaney dances at the Foy Irish Dance School and her face lights up when those happy feet are dancing to an Irish beat.

Delaney and her mom have been participants in many Arthritis Foundation activities including the Juvenile Arthritis Conference in 2010 & 2011; the Juvenile Arthritis camp where Delaney has made life-long friends with other kids with arthritis; Iowa Arthritis Ambassadors, and members of the 2012 Arthritis Walk Committee.

It is because of Delaney's strength, bravery and optimism that the Arthritis Foundation is proud to have her as the 2012 Arthritis Walk 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.