



**Emily Gebhardt**  
**Arthritis Walk Youth Honoree**  
**Indianapolis, Indiana**

Emily was a healthy baby, hardly ever sick, except for the occasional cold or ear infection. But in November of 2007, when Emily was in the third grade, her dad noticed her right knee was swollen. Emily went to the pediatrician and had an x-ray taken. The doctor diagnosed her with a sprained knee and told her to take Advil and ice it.

A couple of days later the doctors' office called back and suggested Emily see an oncologist to rule out cancer.

"Panic set in," says Pam Gebhardt, Emily's mother. "My husband and I were so scared. We had no idea what was happening."

The oncologist did an MRI. The good news was Emily did not have cancer. The bad news was doctors still didn't know why her knee was so swollen. Even laparoscopic surgery came back inconclusive.

Emily's parents scheduled an appointment with a pediatric rheumatologist at Riley Hospital for Children. During the month long wait to see the doctor, Emily's fingers and left knee began to swell.

"She woke up one morning and could not get out of bed," Pam recalls. "It got so bad she couldn't even pull up her pants or button a shirt."

The Gebhardt's rushed Emily to the rheumatologists' office for an emergency visit. Doctors diagnosed her with Polyarticular Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis.

"It was the scariest thing, ever," Pam remembers. "How did my 8-year-old daughter have arthritis? Isn't arthritis an old person's disease?"

Emily, now 14 years old, manages her pain with a prescription pain reliever and weekly injections of Methotrexate – ironically enough, a cancer drug! The freshman at Hamilton Southeastern High School does not let arthritis sideline her love of sports. The honor roll student plays both basketball and volleyball. Emily's determination and fight make us proud to have her as our 2013 Arthritis 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.