



Sam
2013 Jingle Bell Run/Walk
Youth Honoree
Lincoln, NE

Sam was born in March of 2000. He was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes at 18 months of age. It was around this time that Sam was starting to have problems grasping objects. He was checked for arthritis and his family was told it was only "slightly elevated" on the blood test. However, it was explained that his arthritis was a complication of the diabetes. Sam's physician suggested physical therapy for his hands and legs, which was sadly unsuccessful. The doctor told his family to brainstorm and allow him to just grow.

Sam's grandma showed him how to crochet at age four, but it just didn't stick with him. As Sam grew, his difficulty with grasping objects, specifically his insulin needs, continued to progress. It was not until he was almost eight years old that he really caught on to the whole art of crochet. His hands started to loosen up as well as strengthen the more he crocheted.

Sam watches YouTube videos on crocheting, finds patterns in the books he checks out from local libraries, and even Googles patterns. Sam loves to learn! He rigorously enjoys learning new crochet types such as "Irish Lace," but most of all, the more challenging the crochet type, the more Sam is adamant about learning it.

Sam has made many lap blankets and small gifts for others. Right now he is in the process of making a lap blanket for one of his church sisters. He makes hats for little kids and babies. He was working on a granny square and decided he had just enough time to turn it into a small hat for a little baby who looked cold. He also gave her a small blanket. This was done while he was sitting in the doctor's office waiting on his grandpa. He is in the process of making a lap blanket for a church sister right now as well. He has a thing for handing just a small "granny square" to other kids for no other reason than to get them to talk to him or just smile. Sometimes he will meet someone who spends the time to watch him crochet, like when he went to Super Saver and one of their older workers followed Sam around the store to watch what he was doing. He was experimenting with Irish lace. Before he left he gave her the piece he was working on, and told her he would be back with instructions and would teach her, so they could add to it together.

He is still learning the knitting thing, but he's got the crochet down pat. He was told by a 97 year old woman he handed a granny square to at age 12, that he was what was considered in her day a "Master Crochet Artist." She told Sam that most people take a lifetime to learn what he already knew in a few short years.

Sam loves to read, crochet of course, and work on puzzles. He has a few favorite foods that he enjoys, especially lasagna, pizza with all the meat toppings, Chinese buffet (no, it does not bother his blood sugar!) and cheesecake just to name a few.

Sam is an avid pet rescuer; he has rescued birds, dogs and fish from certain death. Sam has found homes for most of these critters and has kept the weaker ones to work with at home, to live their lives out peacefully.

Two summers ago, Sam helped plant a "Memory Garden." It has many roses, lilies, tulips, and mums; just to name a few. He has started a small pond to make it a more peaceful space.

Sam is a very determined boy, but he does have his days when the arthritis and diabetes get the best of him. He gets over those days by crocheting and giving to others. He is very caring as well as compassionate for others, whether they are critter or human!

He loves to spend Sundays with the people of the church. Sam is very helpful with the United Methodist Women (UMW) church ladies. He is an inspiration to all. Potluck Sundays are Sam's favorite days because he can spend the better part of the afternoon hanging out with the church ladies. Recently there was a funeral for a church member, and Sam helped to set up the food trays, and when it was over he helped dry dishes. He is very helpful when his friends there have UMW meetings as well.

Sam loves to help any way he can. He helps with chores, not only with his grandparents and his uncles, but also at home. He is a hard worker even when he is struggling to cope with the pain of his arthritis.

Sam's compassion for others, and his bravery and courage in the face of his own struggles make us proud to recognize him 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.