



**Elizabeth Ann Wertenberger**  
**Arthritis Walk Honoree**  
**Des Moines, IA**

Elizabeth was diagnosed with Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis (JRA) at the age of 13. She had gone undiagnosed for 10 years! Once diagnosed she learned her condition was systemic, meaning that the disease had gone throughout her entire body. Her prognosis wasn't good. She was told she would most likely end up in a wheelchair. Elizabeth made the decision to not give up, and decided to do whatever it took to live a normal life.

Her treatment began immediately upon diagnosis and brought no improvement and plagued Elizabeth with terrible side effects. Her hair began to fall out, and she could barely get out of bed. If that wasn't enough – her kidneys begin to fail.

Disenchanted with the treatments she was receiving, Elizabeth decided to take a natural route and began seeing an herbalist and acupuncturist. These alternative treatments worked for her, and today she is in complete remission.

Elizabeth believes her life's mission is to deliver hope to those who have lost it. Her experiences with arthritis and the impaired movement it can cause led her to begin dance/exercise classes for seniors. She could identify with their loss of movement, and has put her heart and soul into helping the elderly learn to dance again.

As Miss Michigan 2011, Elizabeth has used her platform to encourage others to make the most of their lifetime and reach for the unreachable. She stands as a living witness that dreams do come true. It is because of her drive and determination that the Arthritis Foundation is proud to have Elizabeth Ann Wertenberger as our 2012 Arthritis Walk 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.