

WALK to CURE ARTHRITISSM



Liam Wessels
2014 Walk to Cure Arthritis
Youth Honoree
Cedar Rapids, IA

Meet Liam, one of the 300,000 children affected by juvenile arthritis.

Liam was diagnosed with juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA) just after his second birthday. One morning Liam woke up with a limp and swollen knee and made a visit to his doctor later that day. He was hospitalized, at which time his knee was drained and testing began for things like bacterial joint infections and Lyme's disease. When such tests came back negative, he was sent home with hopes that a viral infection had attacked the joint. Soon after his hospital release, his parents noticed a swollen ankle and Liam was referred to a pediatric rheumatologist.

His parents then received the diagnosis of oligoarticular juvenile arthritis with joints affected being a knee, ankle and wrist. Liam has used medications such as NSAIDS, Methotrexate, Enbrel and steroid joint injections as well as physical therapy to regain some of the range of motion in the affected joints. His is now doing well and is a very active and happy five-year-old boy!

Liam is one of four children and the only boy! His sisters are ages 7, 3 and 1 and he enjoys teaching them about all things rough and tough. He enjoys swimming, boating and wake surfing with his uncle, riding his 4-wheeler and helping his dad on the farm. He also enjoys soccer, riding bikes and roller skating.

Arthritis hasn't slowed down this spunky boy and he is an inspiration to many, tackling the challenges as they come. This youngster has a bright future ahead and will proudly trudge forward supporting the research for a cure for arthritis!

We are thrilled to recognize Liam Wessels as our 2014 Walk to Cure Arthritis 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.