

# Arthritis Action

Summer 2009

A Publication of the Arthritis Foundation, Georgia Chapter

## Arthritis Walk Atlanta Brings Community Together

More than 1,500 people gathered Saturday, May 2 to walk in the annual Arthritis Walk Atlanta, raising more funds than ever before. The Arthritis Foundation, Georgia Chapter would like to thank all of our walkers, volunteers and supporters who have helped us stay on target to raise our goal of \$350,000, a \$100,000 increase over last year! Funds raised at the Arthritis Walk Atlanta support research, programs and advocacy initiatives that help improve the lives of the more than 1.8 million Georgians – including 9,200 children – who are living with arthritis.



Teams make the Arthritis Walk a success.

We would also like to thank our many sponsors, including our national sponsors: Enbrel, NatureMade Triple Flex, Biomet and Arthritis Today magazine; our Chapter Partners: Centocor Ortho Biotech, Coca-Cola Enterprises, Delta Air Lines, Kroger, Northside Hospital, PT Solutions and UCB; our local sponsors: Lamar Outdoor Advertising and Northrop Grumman; and our media partner, WSB.

The success of the Arthritis Foundation, Georgia Chapter's Arthritis Walk Program has also benefited from the dedication of our friends in Gwinnett. On May 30th at Rabbit Hill Park, more than 300 participants gathered to participate in the second annual Arthritis Walk Gwinnett. In just two years, this walk has seen tremendous growth and will raise more than \$38,000 in 2009, reflecting nearly a 200 percent increase. This is just one of the many events our committed volunteers, represented by the North Georgia Rheumatology Group, have taken on to raise both funds and awareness for the Arthritis Foundation, Georgia Chapter. The lead volunteers and organizers of Gwinnett County are already hard at

work in planning the Arthritis Foundation, Georgia Chapter's first Jingle Bell Run which is scheduled for this December.

Just because the Arthritis Walk Atlanta is over doesn't mean you can't still raise funds to fight arthritis. You can still be part of the Arthritis Walk by visiting [www.arthritiswalkatlanta.org](http://www.arthritiswalkatlanta.org). To get involved, contact Molly Parks at [mparks@arthritis.org](mailto:mparks@arthritis.org).

## 2009 Crystal Ball To Be A Celebration of Gratitude

Celebrating the 28th anniversary of its most elegant fundraising event, the Arthritis Foundation, Georgia Chapter will host the Crystal Ball on October 24 at The Ritz-Carlton, Buckhead. Themed "A Celebration of Gratitude," the event is chaired by Pam Short Jenkins. The gala promises to be a stylish affair that will salute the thousands of patrons and volunteers who are committed to fulfilling the Arthritis Foundation's mission of improving lives through leadership in the prevention, control and cure of arthritis and related diseases.

The Arthritis Foundation, Georgia Chapter is recognizing Tony Brewer as the Honorary Chairman for this year's gala. For more than 10 years, Tony's involvement with the Arthritis Foundation has been driven by his passion for children affected by arthritis.

The Crystal Ball supports the Arthritis Foundation's mission by raising awareness and funds for arthritis research, programs and

services that aim to improve the lives of the millions of Americans living with arthritis. Since its inception in 1982, the Crystal Ball has raised more than \$5 million.

The Crystal Ball will recognize Coca-Cola Enterprises (CCE) as its 2009 Corporate Champion for their many contributions to the Arthritis Foundation. CCE continues to provide funding for programs and services that benefit the more than 1.8 million Georgians living with the daily challenges of arthritis.

Funds raised at the Crystal Ball will help support Arthritis Foundation, Georgia Chapter initiatives such as Camp AcheAway, an annual summer camp created specifically for children ages 6-18 who are living with arthritis.

For more information, contact Pam McAdams at 678.237.4458, or [pmcadams@arthritis.org](mailto:pmcadams@arthritis.org) or visit <http://www.arthritis.org/chapters/georgia/crystal-ball.php>.

[www.arthritis.org](http://www.arthritis.org)

Dear Friends,

**How can we even begin to thank you for your support of our 2009 Arthritis Walk Atlanta?** It was an awesome event, on target to raise \$350,000, and we couldn't have done it without your help, enthusiasm and dedication. Rest assured that all of your hard work will go toward helping send more children with juvenile arthritis to our Camp AcheAway program, informing more people of our life-improving programs, funding more groundbreaking research and better reaching our lawmakers who can support important arthritis legislation. In spite of a down economy and tough times, you all shared your devotion, and we are so grateful!

Just like all of you, the Arthritis Foundation, Georgia Chapter has been affected by the changes in our economy. We have been challenged to take a hard look at how we operate, and we have made many decisions that will help keep us strong and able to serve the people who need us most. For example, you will notice that this very newsletter is arriving in your inbox instead of your mailbox. Reducing our printing costs alone will save us more than over \$25,000. This is just one change we are making so that we can continue to fulfill our mission for years to come.

On a larger scale, as we look toward the future, we are moving toward a regionalized model that will include service points in Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi. The Arthritis Foundation, Georgia Chapter is leading the charge to become more efficient and to share valuable resources region-wide. In a regional model, we will be able to pool our time, talent and other resources with those throughout the region so that we can emerge as an even stronger organization, equipped to serve more than 6 million people in the Southeast region who are living with arthritis. I am entirely confident that this new structure will propel us to new heights as we become poised to better deliver on our mission and objectives.

Thank you for being such an important part of our Arthritis Foundation Team. We welcome your thoughts and ideas, and we look forward to working together to keep serving the more than 1.8 million Georgians who need us.

Sincerely,

Rob Shaw  
President and CEO  
Arthritis Foundation, Georgia Chapter

## Programs and Community Outreach Have a Story to Tell?

Join TEAM REACH, The Arthritis Foundation Speakers Bureau! If you are interested in helping the Arthritis Foundation, Georgia Chapter extend



its reach to our community and increase awareness about arthritis and the programs/services of the Arthritis Foundation, then this volunteer role is for you! Please contact Ayana Charleston, Director, Education & Outreach for more info at 678-237-4454 or [acharleston@arthritis.org](mailto:acharleston@arthritis.org).

### Health and Wealth Day Focuses on Better Physical and Financial Health

More than 60 people gathered on Thursday, August 27 to learn how to take control of their physical and financial future. At Villa Christina, participants visited different tables to learn about nutrition, legal planning, exercise, nutrition and medications. Attendees also heard an inspirational speech from Waffle House co-founder Tom Forkner and were able to participate in Tai Chi demonstrations, personal safety sessions and Ask-the-Doctor question and answer sessions.

For more information: Please contact Ayana Charleston, Director, Education & Outreach at 678.237.4454 or [acharleston@arthritis.org](mailto:acharleston@arthritis.org)

### Exciting New Changes for Arthritis Foundation Life Improvement Series Programs

The Arthritis Foundation Aquatics Program and the Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program were revised and improved this year based on feedback from our leaders, as well as trainer recommendations and literature review findings. The recommended changes were also reviewed by several outside experts to ensure the programs remained evidence-based. Here are some of the changes you can expect to see in our programs.



#### Arthritis Foundation Aquatics Program Changes

- Many new exercises and several combinations, to include expanded balance component
- Optional use of newly approved resistance equipment
- Optional deep water component incorporated providing a potentially more challenging option
- Increased water temperature range for pools

#### Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program Changes

- New exercises that incorporate resistance bands and weights to challenge class participants
- Simplified health education and relaxation sections
- Improved joint check, balance and endurance sections

To learn about becoming an instructor, please visit <http://georgia.arthritis.org> and select the "offering programs" link toward the top of the page.

To find a facility near you, please visit <http://georgia.arthritis.org> and select the "programs" link toward the top of the page.

# "Kids' Place"

## Introducing Camp AcheAway!

More than 50 kids traveled to Camp JA July 19-22, held at Camp Will-A-Way at Fort Yargo State Park in Winder, Ga. While there, the campers voted on a new name for Camp JA and decided on Camp AcheAway, the perfect name for a camp that allows kids with arthritis to have a carefree week with other kids just like them in a medically safe environment. The week was action-packed and full of fun and new friends.

The Arthritis Foundation, Georgia Chapter would like to extend its gratitude to the Camp Twin Lakes organization for its partnership in making our dream a reality. We would also like to thank all of our awesome pediatric rheumatologists, nurses, counselors, volunteers and staff for their dedication. The week was a huge success!

Stay tuned for pictures from this year's camp, as well as for information on Camp AcheAway 2010 and other JA programs. For more information on JA initiatives, please contact Patty Rech at 678.237.4450 or [prech@arthritis.org](mailto:prech@arthritis.org).

## Local Family Attends National J.A. Conference

Cesar and Keri Pacheco and their daughter Isabella represented the Arthritis Foundation, Georgia Chapter at this year's National Juvenile Arthritis Conference in Houston, Texas July 9-12. The JA Conference brought families from all over the country together to connect with one another and learn more about how to navigate their child's JA diagnosis. The program was organized by age groups, and each group was supervised by a team of highly experienced children's activity leaders (CALs) which included pediatric rheumatology health professionals, teachers and parents of children with rheumatic diseases. Parents concentrated on attending workshops and networking with other parents while their children are participated in a variety of age-appropriate activities. All activities were designed to help children and teens overcome obstacles, recognize and accept differences in themselves and others and to build and maintain rewarding friendships that can last a lifetime.

"We had such an awesome time in Houston at the JA Conference,"



said Keri Pacheco. "I feel so good about the information that I have taken with me from the Conference to be a better mom for Isabella!"

## JA Family Teams Help Make Arthritis Walk Atlanta a Success!

The Arthritis Foundation, Georgia Chapter would like to thank its Arthritis Walk Atlanta JA Family teams for their enthusiasm. With 29 teams and 241 participants, our JA Family teams raised \$24,123 to help us better achieve our mission.

Leading the way for our JA teams was Gabrielle's Vision, raising more than \$5,600. Team Isabela was our second highest JA family fundraising team with \$2,215 with Zach's Friends in a close third, having raised \$2,194. Again, thanks for your dedication!



*Gabrielle's Vision was this year's top JA Family team.*

For more information on JA programs, contact Patty Rech at [prech@arthritis.org](mailto:prech@arthritis.org).

## Columbus Update

### Walk With Us!

More than 1.8 million Georgians have arthritis. Fortunately, you can help! Arthritis Walks are gearing up all over Georgia to help raise awareness and funds to find a cure for arthritis. Join us in Columbus this Fall.

### Arthritis Walk Columbus

When: Sunday, October 25

Where: Columbus Civic Center

For more information or to sign up:  
[www.arthritiswalkcolumbus.org](http://www.arthritiswalkcolumbus.org)



## Run. Walk. Hike. Help Millions

Join the Arthritis Foundation, Georgia Chapter in Jamaica at the Reggae Marathon Half Marathon and 10K as part of our Joints in Motion Training Team!

### What's In It for You?

- Individual training plans, local Atlanta area training group with weekly running/walking and support from Coach Sean Pfister
- Four nights accommodation at an all-inclusive beach resort in Jamaica
- Team apparel
- Your personalized web site and much more...

Register NOW at <http://2009jimgeorgia.kintera.org>

For more information email Coach Sean Pfister: [seanreds@mac.com](mailto:seanreds@mac.com) or call 678-237-5434.

[www.arthritis.org](http://www.arthritis.org)

# Advocacy Update

## Georgia Advocate Participates in Fly-In for Health Care Reform

The Arthritis Foundation conducted a Health Care Reform fly-in with arthritis advocates who have experienced challenges with the current health care system. Legislative fly-ins help to put faces and stories on the important issues and challenges that affect Americans with arthritis and their families.

Aimee Busquet, an arthritis advocate from Dawsonville, Georgia, was on Capitol Hill as part of the Arthritis Foundation's Health Care Reform event on June 10. She met with Congressman Nathan Deal to discuss her personal challenges accessing affordable health care and managing medical debt.

Aimee currently has health coverage under her husband's plan, but three years ago, when she relocated from Florida to Georgia, they were both unemployed for three months. During that time, her husband was able to get interim coverage for him and their daughter, but she was denied. They had to pay an exorbitant amount of money for her to be covered by COBRA. Aimee takes a total of 10 prescription medicines each month, each of which has a tier-level co-pay, totaling about \$350.00 a month for prescriptions alone. Her annual deductible of \$500 hits within the first few months of each year due one procedure or another.



*Advocate Aimee Busquet meets with Congressman Nathan Deal*

After each of her 10 surgeries for arthritis, their medical debt has grown from year to year. They established payment plans with hospitals and other health care providers, and as soon as one is paid, another procedure is scheduled and the cycle begins again.

In the past, Aimee has foregone Enbrel and other medications due to high cost, as well as certain tests and procedures. She has put off visiting a physical and/or occupational therapist due to high weekly cost of each visit. She has only undergone a prescribed treatment when recovering from any of my

major joint replacements. In those cases, she does not have a choice, so they cut back in other areas of their monthly budget. Other than her rheumatologist, Aimee has put off visiting other doctors, because she can only afford her monthly rheumatologist visit.

Aimee wants to continue teaching, although she is finding it increasingly difficult. She realizes that she will have to go on disability in the near future. Aimee states "living with six joint replacements and severe rheumatoid arthritis makes it very difficult to maintain employment".

For more information on advocacy initiatives, visit [www.arthritis.org/advocacy](http://www.arthritis.org/advocacy).



**Save these dates:**

Crystal Ball - October 24

Arthritis Walk Columbus - October 25

JA Family Education Day - November 7