



Rockford, IL 2011 Honorees



Kelly Clayton

My name is Kelly Clayton and even though I showed many of the symptoms of arthritis throughout my childhood, I was not diagnosed with Rheumatoid Arthritis until I was 22. I had excessive surgeries on various joints throughout my childhood, but it wasn't until my first child was born that a physician tested me for RA. The first several years were very difficult with my diagnosis as physicians worked to find the right combination of medication for my disease, but once I was put on biologics, I felt as though I had my life back. I feel that my diagnosis has made me a stronger person and I enjoy being a patient advocate and speaking up for those who do not have a voice.

Alex Clayton

My name is Alex Clayton, I'm a 5th grader at Whitman Post Elementary, and I have Juvenile Arthritis caused by Strep A in the bloodstream. I started having issues when I was 2 years old and it took nearly 7 years to get an exact diagnosis the for type of arthritis I have. The doctors thought I had different types of arthritis until they found the strep A in my blood stream. Once they found that, they were able to start proper treatment. I get monthly bicillin injections and am also on other medications to control it. The type of arthritis I have not only affects my joints, but also will eventually attack the valves in my heart, which is a bit scary. Right now, I'm able to do things like play soccer, video games, and go to Camp JAM, which is something I look forward to every year.

Andrew Clayton

My name is Andrew Clayton, I'm a 3rd grader at Whitman Post Elementary, and I have PFAPA, or Periodic Fever Syndrome, which is an autoimmune disease. It causes me to have high fevers, massive stomach pains, joint pain, fatigue, and sore throats every month. I've had the disease since I was 3 years old. I had surgery to remove my tonsils & adenoids when I was 5, which was supposed to help, but it only worked for a short time and the disease returned. My brother & I both have to travel to Madison a few times a year to see the Pediatric Rheumatologist for our diseases, along with many other specialists.