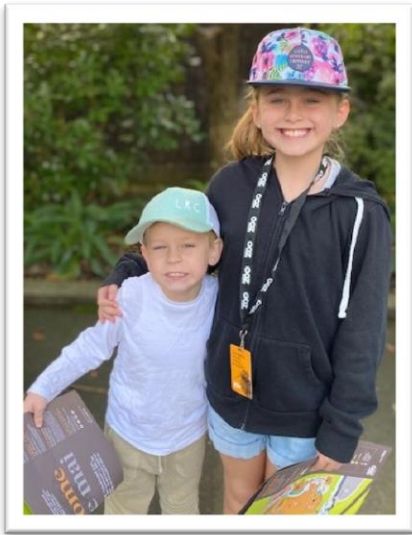


KWANZ's Young Achiever - Esme

WRITTEN BY KWANZ MOTHER - Kylie

Esme is almost 10 years old. She first had problems with her knees when she was 3 years old. She had a very bad episode at age 5. She couldn't walk, had a high temperature, and was generally miserable with knee pain. Esme was admitted to Starship for two nights where she improved drastically. After this, she had knee pain on and off and was always tired.

Esme proceeded to have many appointments at the Starship Children's Hospital with the Paediatric Orthopaedics team. None of the Doctors could ever say what was wrong with her despite many tests.



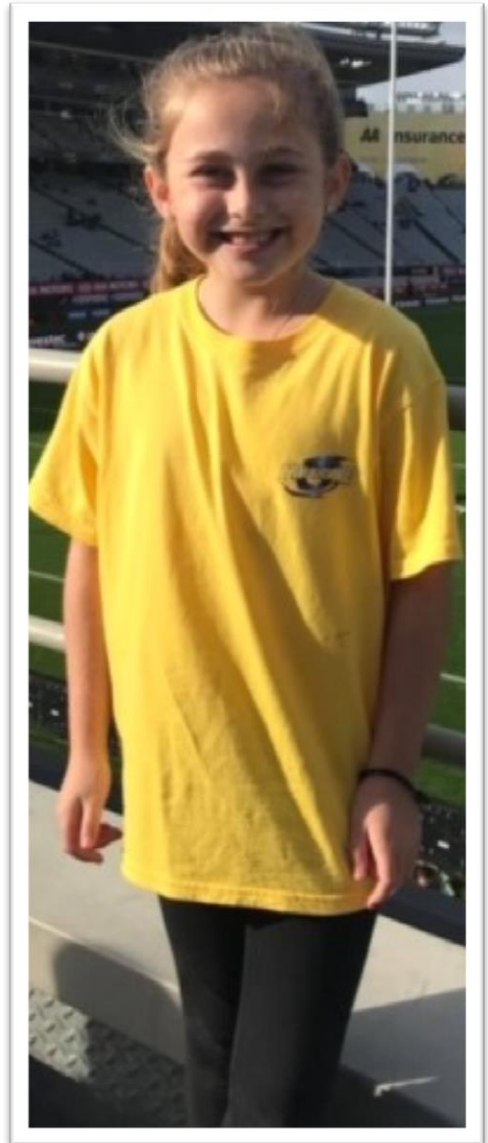
I did some digging myself and asked our GP to refer us to a private Paediatrician. Once we saw her and we showed her photos of Esme's knees swelling and not being able to walk, plus explaining that Esme had extreme tiredness and was in pain, she referred us to the Paediatric Rheumatology team at Starship Hospital where we finally got a diagnosis of Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis.

It was great to finally have a name to put to what she had, but it brings about a whole other world to then go into.

At her worst Esme couldn't walk, we often had to carry her or help her dress and undress. She also missed a lot of time at school. She is on Methotrexate injections now instead of the oral Methotrexate, it is in the hope that it will help to control the Juvenile Arthritis more than it had been. She has had quite a few steroid injections and has stayed in the hospital a few times when things get really bad.

Despite all that she has been through Esme is such a bright, happy, kind, considerate, and amazing person. She usually thinks about others before herself, even if she is sore. She has organised mufti days at her school to help promote Juvenile Arthritis awareness.

She has spoken to her class and the school about Juvenile Arthritis and how it can affect her and others. Esme loves to play netball and even if she is sore she tries to play for as long as she can. She loves swimming which is great on her joints so we do as much of that as possible! Esme is so strong and brave, as parents, we couldn't be prouder of her!!



Please remember every journey is unique to that person. Sharing a personal story is an act of kindness; it lets others know they are not alone.

Please check with your child's Specialist or GP if this article has generated medical questions for you.

Disclaimer

The opinions expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect the view of Kids With Arthritis NZ Charitable Trust.