

# KWANZ's Young Achiever - India

WRITTEN BY KWANZ TEENAGER - India

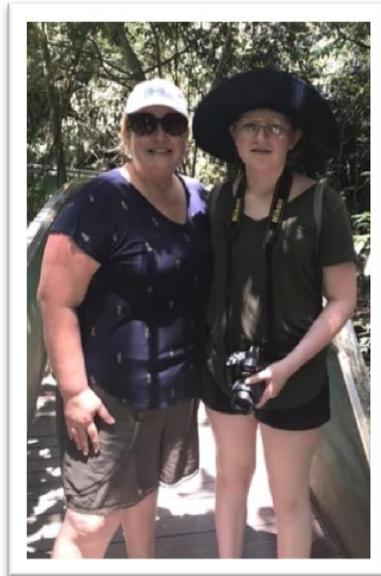
I first had symptoms of JIA in 2016 at the age of 11 years old and in 2017 I was officially diagnosed. Over the past few years I have had multiple hospital admissions for my JIA and Pain Sensitization. I have had loads of time off school where I have tried to work from home and still be a high achiever. So far this is working. Although it has been really hard, I have had great support from family and friends and also from organisations such as Kids With Arthritis NZ. The Camps have been amazing and I learnt a lot through attending them. Last year I was admitted to Rotorua Hospital in March and October for two weeks at a time and although my Arthritis was flaring occasionally, my biggest hurdle during the October stay was my CRPS and Pain Sensitization. After this visit – we had a catch up with Dr. Drake at Starship and he asked if we would be interested in a placement at The Wilson Centre in Auckland. We were very excited about this opportunity so we said yes right away.

I went to The Wilson Centre for three weeks in November/December last year. During my stay there, I had a Psychologist, Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist and a Play Therapist. I stayed there from Sunday to Friday each week but was lucky enough to be let out to go home for the weekends. My Mum and Dad took turns staying there with me and my twin sister came for some time also.

The weeks were full of appointments mixed with recreational time and family time. I also attended school there each day for one hour. I met some amazing people and I learnt so much about myself while on my journey at The Wilson Centre. The staff were incredible, especially my Play Therapist Vicki. Vicki had me up and moving and distracted enough to forget about my pain sometimes. Vicki was kind and gentle and I will always remember her.

When I arrived at The Wilson Centre, I was quite frail. I had little confidence that I could not walk further than 500 meters without a walking frame. I was scared when I was out in public and I would often try and get out of going to do things with my family because of my fears and anxieties.

By the time I left The Wilson Centre, my Mum and Dad say I was a different kid! I could walk for longer than I had been able to in a very long time – with no aides. I was smiling and laughing for the first time in quite some time. This made Mum and Dad cry. I felt confident. Not to speak in front of the Prime Minister or anything – but confident that I could walk, smile, attend school, enjoy Christmas in Australia with my family and confident to try and enjoy things more. My entire family feels that The Wilson Centre changed our lives.



India and Mum – Belinda, are on a native bush boardwalk in Australia.

Two days after returning home from The Wilson Centre, we flew out to Australia to spend almost a month with my Aunt, Uncle and Cousin. My time at The Wilson Centre meant that while on holiday I

could shop for hours! enjoy wildlife parks, go out for dinner, laugh and make memories we will treasure forever.

I have continued to make great progress since returning from Australia and although the Lockdown has kept me home from school – I am back into it this coming week. The Wilson Centre taught me the importance of routine and exercise. I try and get up each day reminding myself that it is a new day and that it is going to be wonderful.



India at The Wilson Centre with the Physiotherapist and Occupational Therapist.

**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.**