

# Kids with Character

*This recognition showcases students who have made a difference by accepting responsibility, showing kindness, valuing others' concerns, helping resolve conflicts and honoring their commitments.*

In case you've forgotten, it's pretty tough being a kid. In addition to all the pressure that comes from their peers, they have to deal with nagging parents and annoying siblings ... oh, and all that homework! But for 9-year-old Maggie Strader of Lagrange, that stuff's the easy part. When she was 7 years old, Maggie was diagnosed with Polyarticular Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis

"She has shown symptoms since she was 3," said family friend Terry Knepper. "Her parents took her from doctor to doctor until she was able to get the diagnosis. She has arthritis in all of her joints, but especially in her hands, feet, and jaw. It is very painful for her at times, but she able to control it with proper medication and routine visits to the clinic."

Any time a person – especially a child – has to deal with a difficult medical condition, it's deserving of our sympathy. In Maggie's case, though, that's not good enough.

The hard-working fourth-grader from Keystone Elementary School is extremely passionate about helping other kids who have Juvenile Arthritis, and she's very involved in helping the cause. She has participated in an annual fundraiser, the Northeast Ohio National Arthritis Foundation walk, which takes place at the Cleveland Zoo. In three years, she has raised more than \$3,600.

She also was awarded a \$1,500 scholarship to attend the National Juvenile Arthritis Conference in St. Louis, where she learned about advocacy and how to get the government to further support research and awareness for Juvenile Arthritis. And if that wasn't enough, Maggie will be going to Washington, D.C., in the spring to be further trained in advocacy, as well as to speak to our senators and congressmen on behalf of the National Arthritis Foundation.

"Maggie truly is an amazing girl who, through it all, is able to keep a smile on her face," Knepper said. "She stays active and has played on a soccer team and is in cheerleading. It is remarkable how many people in Lagrange and surrounding areas are now aware of Juvenile Arthritis thanks to Maggie and all of her hard work."

Now ... about that homework ...



## Maggie

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