

News Rheum

Your Rheumatology Newsletter

Issue: Winter 2023

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✳️ Upcoming Events ✳️

February 15 – March 8, 2023

Arthritis Society's [Camp Ontario](#) registration opens

February 28, 2023

Cassie + Friends' [RareTalks: Genetics and Childhood Rheumatic Diseases talk](#)

March 26, 2023

Cassie + Friends' [Around the Bay Road Race](#)

✳️ In the News ✳️

Congratulations to Dr. Dushnicky and Nurse Ma'Anne who welcomed new members to their family!

Welcome to the new vasculitis fellow Dr. Florence Choi!

Welcome to the new lupus fellow Dr. Stephanie Wong!

Farewell Dr. Rayfel Schneider! Enjoy your retirement and we will miss you!

Congratulations to Dr. Andrea Knight for being awarded a Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Mental Health and Chronic Disease of Childhood through the University of Toronto!

✳️ Scholarships ✳️

Enrolling in a post-secondary program? Here are some scholarships that you may help you with your tuition.

- [Kevin Collins Abilities Scholarship](#)
Deadline: **March 31, 2023**
- [Bonnie Cameron Post-Secondary Scholarship](#)
Deadline: **May 15, 2023**
- [Lupus Canada 2023 Scholarship](#)
Deadline: **May 31, 2023**
- [UCBeyond 2023 Scholarship](#)
Deadline: **June 18, 2023**
- [DCCI Scholarship for Canadian Students with Disabilities](#)
Deadline: **July 31, 2023**

Visit [Cassie + Friends'](#) scholarship website for more scholarship opportunities!



If you would like to join the mailing list, please email: rheumatology.newsletter@sickkids.ca

✳️ Staying Safe in Winter ✳️

By: Veronica Ali

Winter is here again! A time of celebration and snow. While this season can be beautiful, there is still lots that can be done to stay safe, happy, and healthy this winter season!

Among the many ways of enjoying the season, you may want to consider snow pants for the children who love playing in the snow. For those of us with arthritis, comfortable (and safe) winter boots are a must. Walking in the snow can be a challenge on its own, don't need even more strain on the joints!

Finding something to exercise your body is imperative this season, most children and teens will not want to exercise inside, so you must make the exercise fun. Go skating, skiing, sledding. Find some way to make the outdoors fun when it is anything but.

Finally, there is the challenge of keeping healthy and happy during a time of year with little to no sunshine. Talk to your healthcare team about vital vitamins for the season, such as Vitamin D.

✳️ Did You Know? ✳️

- Lupus, oligoarticular and polyarticular arthritis, morphea, uveitis, and juvenile dermatomyositis are all more common in girls compared to boys.
- Kawasaki disease and juvenile spondylarthritis are more common in boys than in girls.
- Lupus has been called “the disease of a thousand faces” because the symptoms vary from one person to another.
- JIA affects about 10,000 children and teens in Canada.
- In some children with Polyarticular JIA, the arthritis may begin in only one or two joints.

✳️ Want to Get Involved? ✳️

The Division of Rheumatology is seeking parents and patients to help in several areas. We are looking for:

- A member to sit on the SickKids Rheumatology Research Council (for more information please contact julie.cho@sickkids.ca)
- Members to represent SickKids on the PR-COIN parent and patient working groups. Please see <https://www.pr-coin.org/families-overview> for more information.
- Members for the SickKids Rheumatology Family Advisory Council and its subcommittees (for more information please contact rheumatology.fac@sickkids.ca)
- A parent representation to join our JIA New Patient Education group (for more information please contact julie.cho@sickkids.ca)

Please contact us if you're interested in joining or would like to contribute content to the next newsletter:

rheumatology.newsletter@sickkids.ca

✱ My Story ✱

By: Veronica Ali

Hi there, my name is Veronica. I am 19 years old and was a rheumatology patient at SickKids for about 5 years before transitioning to adult care. I was diagnosed with Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (JIA) on my 13th birthday. I had a strange story about my diagnosis but maybe I'll save that for another time since it's a long story.

When I was diagnosed, I had known that arthritis was a possibility. But when I heard the news, I frankly couldn't believe it. Neither could my mom who was standing mere feet away from me crying her eyes out because we finally had a diagnosis for something that other doctors were calling "growing pains". I finally could get some relief. My mom had worn mascara that day, so she resembled a raccoon. We have a family rule now: "no wearing makeup to the hospital" for this exact reason.

I don't think I will ever forget that first appointment with rheumatology. I was scared, overwhelmed and in pain. I was in a new place on my birthday, and I was miserable—as any kid would be. But my doctor and the nurse came in, wielding big smiles and hearts of gold. They presented me with a birthday gift because who would want to be in the clinic on their birthday? I was beyond surprised, and I am forever grateful to them for that day.

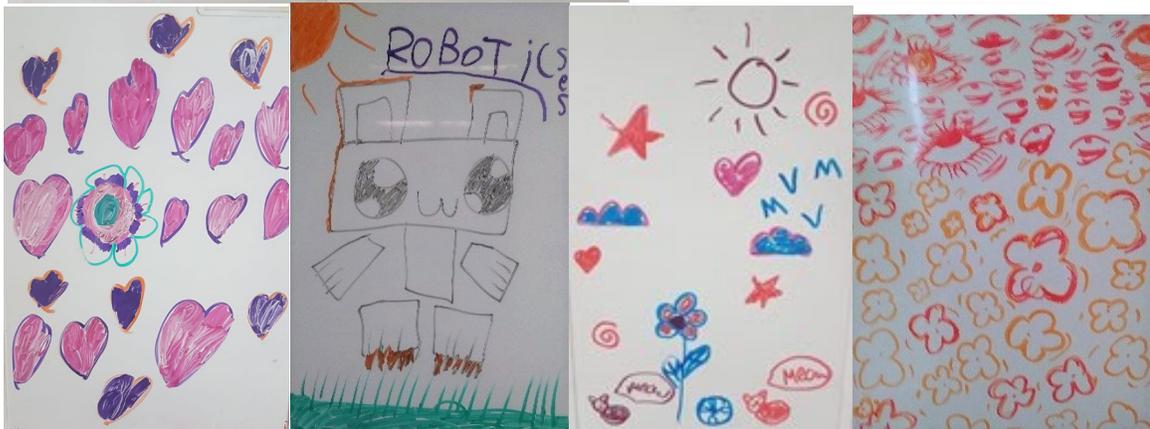
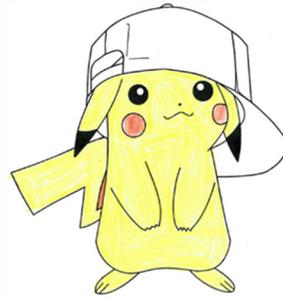
Even though my JIA was changing daily, school stayed the same, thankfully. I learned as much as I could. Luckily, I had some amazing teachers who helped me catch up on any missed homework. I made it through school, thinking I wanted to be a teacher. I am good with kids after all. As I went through high school, seeing how SickKids helped me and so many others around me, I changed my mind. I wanted to be those people giving scared kids a smile.

I went into school to be a Medical Office Assistant (MOA) with the aim of working with children. I set my mind to it and made sure that nothing stopped me. Because I can assure you, if I were smart enough, I would have gone into medicine because of what the clinic had done for me.

On one of the first days of the program, my professor had asked the class why we were in this program, and we all went around the room sharing our reasons. Some people said that it was because it was like the job that they did before coming to Canada. Others said it was because the health side of things interested them. When the professor got to me, I stood up and said something very similar to this: "I want to become an MOA because I want to help people. I may not have a background in healthcare, but I was a patient as a child. I know how scary it can be walking into a doctor's office or a hospital and not knowing what the outcome will be. I want to help kids like SickKids helped me as a kid."

I am currently in my final semester in college and interning at the very place where I was a patient. I was very fortunate to be in the spot I am in now. I am doing my best to keep it, and to all the kids and parents who are reading this, don't give up. You can do anything if you put your mind to it!

Art Rheum



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