

OAS Monthly Bulletin

Oklahoma Arthritis Society Newsletter • May 2014

Oklahoma Arthritis Society hosts its 10th annual convention

The Oklahoma Arthritis Society's 10th annual arthritis convention is May 30 and 31 in Oklahoma City, Okla., at the Cox Convention Center.

Each year the convention brings together people of all ages, from the entire state, to learn more about arthritis. Mornings start off with group water exercise classes such as aerobics and zumba. Mini seminars are held over the most common types of arthritis to spread awareness and understanding of this disease. The last day of the convention features a keynote speech from a doctor who specializes in arthritis treatments. This year's speaker is Dr. James Campbell. Dr. Campbell will discuss the latest options in arthritis treatment such as medications and physical therapy.

"I began working with arthritis patients 20 years ago," Dr. Campbell said. "It's amazing to see how far medications and treatments have come in that time. With these options, many of my patients can go about their normal lives without being held back by arthritis. This was rare to see when I first started."

Kayla Coffey, CEO, created the Oklahoma Arthritis Society and started this event in 2005.

"Ten years ago I set out to change the face of arthritis," Coffey said. "I have suffered from arthritis most of my life. Arthritis is often associated with older people and as something that just happens with age. The truth is arthritis does not discriminate. I started the convention to educate our members on

different types of arthritis, treatment options and my favorite activity, water exercise classes. It's really an opportunity for people from all walks of life to come together and make a difference in each other's lives."

Participants should register online at the Oklahoma Arthritis Society's website OklahomaArthritisSociety.com. Check in starts at 9 a.m. May 30 and the event ends at 7 p.m. May 31. The event is free for all OAS members and \$15 for nonmembers. Volunteers and donations are welcome.

What's Inside:

Letter from the director	2
OKC Child, Taylor Phillips	3
Volunteer with OAS	4
Did you know?	4

[Click here to watch the director's message](#)



Letter from the director:

I started the Oklahoma Arthritis Society 10 years ago to create a community of people who all suffer from some form of arthritis. This year we raised more than \$3,000 for arthritis research and welcomed 150 new members.

Growing up, I felt very out of place as a child with arthritis. I didn't know anyone else my age with it. People associate arthritis with older people. It wasn't until I got to college that I learned I wasn't alone. Of the more than 50 million Americans who suffer from arthritis, 300,000 of them are children. This is why OAS's biggest goal is to make it common knowledge that arthritis doesn't discriminate by age.

I would like to thank all those who have volunteered for OAS over the years. Weekly volunteers for water exercise classes make check-ins and announcements much easier. I truly do not think the conventions would be as



successful without our yearly volunteers for the event. They make it possible for the members to relax and enjoy the event, rather than help run the event themselves.

OAS always strives to be better, so this year our fundraising goal is \$4,000 for arthritis research. We would also like to increase our membership. Members are welcome from all over Oklahoma.

In the next year OAS will also be expanding weekly events to the Tulsa area.

Kayla Coffey

This newsletter is published monthly by Kayla Coffey, communications director. Questions, comments or suggestions may be sent to kayla.coffey@okstate.edu.

Volunteer with the Oklahoma Arthritis Society!

The Oklahoma Arthritis Society relies on volunteers and donations from businesses to put on its best programs. Volunteers can help both weekly and yearly with different OAS programs.

Weekly volunteers help with check-ins and announcements for water exercise classes.

Local gyms provide free pool time for weekly classes. Restaurants donate food for OAS meetings held after class the first Tuesday of every month.

OAS volunteers are often the family and friends of a member. Kay Phillips became a volunteer when her daughter Taylor joined OAS four years ago.

"I love volunteering with OAS because I can see the difference that I make," Phillips said. "If I weren't

there to do check-ins, a member might have to stop participating to help. Volunteers are even more important during the convention."

The OAS annual convention needs a lot of volunteers and business donations. Two lunches and two dinners are donated from restaurants for the convention. Volunteers are needed for check-in, setup and clean up. Also, the OAS needs volunteers to serve meals, direct people for mini seminars and be able to answer questions.

Volunteers can sign up on the OAS website at OklahomaArthritisSociety.com or by calling Kayla Coffey at (405) 255-7435.

OKC child finds comfort and friends at OAS arthritis convention

Twelve-year-olds stay active riding bikes, walking the mall and playing league sports, but some do this all with difficulty.

Taylor Phillips considers herself to be an average 12-year-old, but she also suffers from juvenile arthritis.

Of the more than 50 million Americans who suffer from arthritis, 300,000 are children, according to the Arthritis Foundation's website. The Oklahoma Arthritis Society is trying to change the stigma that arthritis



“The first year it was comforting to learn about the disease and just how many other kids have it as well.”

is just something that happens to people when they get old. Arthritis does not discriminate by age. One of the ways OAS does this is by hosting an

annual convention in Oklahoma City that features water exercise classes, mini educational seminars on various types of arthritis and a keynote speech on the latest treatment options. This year's convention is May 30 and 31.

“I've been attending the convention for the past three years,” Taylor said. “The first year it was comforting to learn about the disease and just how many other kids have it as well. Now, I like going to meet new people who have arthritis, just like me.

“I don't always feel well enough to go for a bike ride or walk around the mall with my friends from school, and they don't understand why. They hear arthritis and think it's just something

for their grandparents, not friends. The people I've meet through the OAS understand this stuff because they go through it, too.”

Kayla Coffey, CEO of the Oklahoma Arthritis Society, started the nonprofit organization for kids and Oklahomans like Taylor.

“I love hearing stories like Taylor's because it reminds me of myself as a kid,” Coffey said.

“I wish an organization like this had been around when I was growing up, so it's heartwarming to know we have been there for kids like Taylor.”

The OAS dedicates its time to arthritis awareness, especially juvenile arthritis, and to raising money for arthritis research. Right now research funding leads to better treatment options, but hopefully in the future it will lead to a cure. The OAS has a 40 and under club, which is a mentor program for its members like Taylor to be paired with an adult, who has had similar experiences and can help her through things. The OAS also hosts weekly water exercise classes for its members at participating gyms in the Oklahoma City area.





Did you know?

There are more than 120 different types of arthritis.

Approximately 300,000 children under the age of 18 suffer from some form of arthritis.

Juvenile arthritis is one of the most common childhood diseases in the United States.

Arthritis is the No. 1 cause of disability in the United States.

Anyone can develop arthritis.

Thank you for your donations!

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