

# HI, MY NAME IS GEORGE

I am 9 years old... and have been diagnosed with a rare condition.

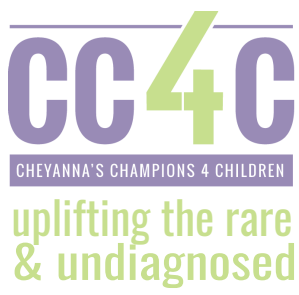


High School Team: Lake Travis Theatre  
Champion Teammate: Allison Miller

From the time George was able to speak, he complained that his legs and ankles hurt. By the time he was 18 months old, he would complain of pain three to five times per week, and at times, refuse to walk. We were reassured by both a pediatrician and an orthopedist that this was just "growing pains". At 5 years old, the pain was so intense that he refused to walk which led to some x-rays that showed all was "normal".

George's pain continued over the next several years, flaring before illnesses, as we continued to search for answers. After 8 years of looking for a reason behind the pain and demanding more testing, an orthopedist working with a rheumatologist did full body bone scans and two critical blood tests. George's blood tests were both positive. His ANA was high indicating inflammation in his body and his HLA-B27 was positive, a potential genetic marker for juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA) with potential ankylosing spondylitis.

JIA is an autoimmune and inflammatory disease leading to joint swelling, stiffness, and pain that does not go away. Ankylosing spondylitis is an inflammatory arthritis affecting the joints of the spine and the pelvis. George is a bright, enthusiastic boy, still enduring many rounds of blood testing, scans, and treatments, looking for more answers. Despite George's set backs his soul is always singing!



George's Motto:  
"My Soul is Always Singing"