

Meet the ambassador of Walk 'N Rock for Kids: 10-year-old Sarah Blincoe

Ten-year-old Sarah Blincoe loves to play sports, especially covering third base on the baseball diamond. A competitive spirit suits her well on the baseball and soccer fields, where she uses her arm braces as sticks to connect with the ball.

With this same sense of determination, Sarah will lead thousands of participants from the huge arch at Raley Field toward the State Capitol as the ambassador of Walk 'N Rock for Kids on Sunday, May 29. <http://www.walkandrock.org>

Sarah, who was born with mild Cerebral Palsy, will be walking to benefit Access Leisure youth programs, part of the Sacramento Parks and Recreation Department that provides sports and leisure opportunities for people with disabilities.

<http://www.accessleisuresac.org/>

Sarah is in training to go even farther this year than the one-and-a-half miles she walked during last year's event, her determination supported by a walker and leg braces. She hopes to have 10 kids on her walk team, and she's inviting teammates from her baseball team, Access Leisure, and friends from Crocker Riverside School, where she's in 4th grade.

A compassionate young woman, Sarah asked her mom, Peggy Blincoe, "What can I do to help people?" and then chose to put her energy into Walk 'N Rock for Kids, joining with others in the community to assist Access Leisure and a total of 22 local nonprofits that benefit children and youth.

Last year she walked in support of others to be able to attend Access Leisure camps, This year Sarah is old enough to attend an Access Leisure summer water adventure camp, and she is walking again to raise funds for others.

In Sarah's Words:

"From the start of my life, I've had cerebral palsy. Another name for cerebral palsy is CP.

I have braces for my legs. I like my braces. I get to choose the color of my braces and it is good to have them. My braces are to keep my legs strong or my legs will be floppy.

I have sticks that are also called fore-arm crutches. I have a walker. We sometimes call my walker "wheels". I can't walk long distances so I have to use my crutches or my wheels.

I don't really like to answer questions about my equipment because it embarrasses me in a way. My mom is teaching me to answer the questions to make people aware of other people with differences.

I can do almost anything. I love to play sports and other activities. My mom says that I am very competitive. I am so competitive because I always want to win. I can hit the ball with my stick in tetherball. I can use my stick instead of a bat when playing baseball too. My favorite position to play is third base. I can play soccer really good. I use my stick to kick the ball. Once a year, I compete in a track meet for kids with physical disabilities. I also get to try out Paralympic sports equipment once a year. I love the handcycles. This summer I get to go away to camp for the first time.

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I like to play with other kids. It is fun no matter if I can't play the game like everyone else. If I cannot play at all, I will cheer you on!

People with disabilities are regular kids like everybody else. I do not like the word disabled because I am able to do anything if I try."

In Sarah's Mom's Words:

"Sarah is learning how to be an advocate for children like herself and often asks how she can help others in the community. Sarah may not be aware of it, but she has been helping her community since the day she started participating in sports programs and other activities in the community. Watching not only Sarah, but also other special needs children participate in physical activities can easily motivate others to overcome their own goals.

Two years ago I had heard about Walk 'N Rock from one of the amazing people that coordinate the sports and social programs for those with special needs in Sacramento. I considered taking Sarah out for the walk, but hadn't signed up right away. About a week before, I was asked if Sarah could come out to the start of the walk and have her picture taken. I certainly wasn't going to just go out for pictures though. Sarah and I could do the walk. It's a short walk and we would be done and home in plenty of time for her to go to her friend's birthday party later. The turnout seemed small, but what a great morning that was! Sarah participated in her first Walk 'N Rock although she was pulled in a wagon.

Two years ago, Sarah thought that early morning walk and wagon ride was just a fun thing to go to. She wasn't aware it was raising money to help not just the program that allows her to play baseball, but other organizations that help those in need throughout Sacramento.

I went home thinking Walk 'N Rock was such a great fund raising idea. It has a quick walk-a-thon to raise money for charities, booths for those charities to share their information and then an evening concert with really good music to raise more funds for the charities. I didn't need an invitation to sign up for last year. I was ready to do it as soon as the website was updated.

Sarah was not only eager to participate last year in Walk 'N Rock because it was fun, but I had explained how it would help so many people in the community including her baseball friends. I signed Sarah up to walk as part of another team and then created a team to support her. Her team included family members and a few friends from her Brownie troop. Sarah had asked how far the walk was. Her dad explained that 5k was about three miles. Sarah had been really making amazing progress in physical therapy and was becoming quite confident in her ability. She decided not only would she participate in Walk 'N Rock, but she was going to walk it! Telling friends that Sarah would physically be walking part of the walk, made it easier to have people sign up.

Sarah walked about a mile and a half at last year's Walk 'N Rock. When she started, she was doing it to help others. When she was almost at the half way point, I know she was doing it to win her own race.

When Sarah left the Walk 'N Rock event that morning, she had raised money to help others in her community just like she wanted as well as raising her own confidence in the process.

Our family is eager to participate in Walk 'N Rock this year. Sarah is already signed up on a team. I've also created a team page for Sarah's family and friends to support her."

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About Walk 'N Rock for Kids

Walk 'N Rock <http://www.walkandrock.org> is presented by Hope Productions™ Foundation — a Sacramento-based nonprofit providing support and training for charities serving children and youth.

The day's events kick off at 8 a.m. with a 5K walk featuring individuals and teams from throughout the Greater Sacramento area to raise funds for local children's nonprofits. In the evening, a benefit concert will feature the legendary band KISS.

Hope Productions Foundation <http://www.hopeproductions.org> is a Sacramento-based nonprofit, whose goal is to provide support and training at no cost for 22 local charities serving more than 50,000 children and youth. Services include leadership training and guidance for nonprofits to improve their marketing, fundraising, partnerships, and board cultivation so they may become more efficient and increase their potential for long-term sustainability.

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