**Jodi Brookhart Award Nomination 2019: Rose Golonka**

Rose Golonka has always loved the water. She napped in the pool as an infant, jumped off the Woodcroft high dive at age three, swam the width of the pool at four, and finally joined her older brother and sister as a Whirlwind at age five. She was determined to learn butterfly at age six, and it quickly became her favorite stroke. She never missed a meet, and could be found waiting in the car at dawn on those Saturdays, barely able to contain her excitement.

In the spring of 2017 at age seven, Rose began to experience excruciating chest pain when playing soccer. That summer, it started happening during swimming, then walking, singing, or just breathing, and eventually her pain diffused throughout her entire body. After seeing multiple specialists, in March 2018 a pediatric rheumatologist diagnosed Rose with Slipping Rib Syndrome, costochondritis, and Amplified Musculoskeletal Pain Syndrome (AMPS). Rose has hypermobile ribs which slip out of place, causing severe pain. This syndrome led to costochondritis, which mimics the pain of a heart attack. Costochondritis is temporary for some, but Rose’s condition is chronic.

AMPS is Rose’s biggest challenge. It is a very painful chronic medical condition that can cause pain anywhere in the body. With AMPS, there is an abnormal short circuit in the spinal cord. The normal pain signal not only travels up to the brain, but also goes to the neurovascular nerves, causing blood vessels to constrict, leading to a lack of oxygen and acid build-up that causes pain. This new pain signal also goes across the abnormal short circuit in the spinal cord and leads to more pain, which becomes greatly “amplified” through this continuous cycle.

For Rose, this means that everything hurts, all the time. There is no cure for AMPS. Rose may never be pain-free, but with intensive physical therapy, pain management, and coping skills, the goal is for her to become functional – able to go to school every day and consistently participate in sports. Rose bravely faces her pain every day and works to educate others and raise awareness about chronic pain conditions. “I’m lucky to have support from my family, friends, and coaches,” she says.

When Rose was diagnosed, she was advised that she should avoid her beloved butterfly stroke due to its potential impact on her spine and rib cage. When she protested, the therapist and doctor agreed that she could swim butterfly at meets if she could endure it, but she shouldn’t practice it regularly. There was a question of whether she would be able to withstand swimming a 50 fly as she entered the 9-10 age group this year. Rose is such a persistent and determined girl, she has powered through this event this season despite her pain, and she looks forward to swimming butterfly at champs!

