

## **Sarah....We got a very big clap at the end from the audience**

**April 2019**

Hi. My name is Sarah. I am 6 years old. Last year, when I started school, my Mum and Dad noticed a small patch of hair missing on the top of my head. I thought maybe I had knocked it on the Monkey Bars because I play on the Monkey Bars at school all the time. A couple of months later, another patch appeared near the first one so we went to the doctors to get them checked out. That's when I was sent to see a dermatologist and I was told I had Alopecia Areata.



I started using lotions and getting injections into my patches and Mum took me to see a Naturopath too. Now I take powders and herbs every day and luckily so far my patches have stayed little and new hairs have grown back. I don't know how I feel about having Alopecia Areata but I hope my hair keeps growing back. I love my hair but if it all falls out I want to get a purple wig. Right now it is really long and goes almost down to the back of my knees when it's wet. When I'm ready I'm going to donate my hair to the AAAF for wigs - Maybe I can even get my own hair in a wig for me one day.

I have always loved doing sports and being active. I used to do dancing and swimming and then I found gymnastics and I love it. Towards the end of last year, I joined Acrobatic Gymnastics at Melbourne Acrobatic Gymnastics Academy (MAGA). I train 9 hours a week with the Acro Squad, competing as a top in a level 3 pair. I love all the tumbling and standing on shoulders and all the tricks we get to do. Since joining MAGA I have been working on my flexibility and strength and on my tumbling. I can now go flat on nearly all sides in the splits. This sponsorship from the AAAF will help towards my term fees so that I can keep training and competing with MAGA which I love so much.

**June 2019**

Through the AAAF's sponsorship program, Sarah has received funding for her term fees at Melbourne Acrobatic Gymnastics Academy (MAGA) this has enabled her to participate in squad training which is 9 hours per week. With the competition season ahead of us, the timing of this sponsorship was absolutely perfect, as the cost of new competition leotards, tracksuits, and competition entry fees is also due. The AAAF's sponsorship has meant that we can cover the costs of these compulsory important items as we don't need to pay the bulk of her term fees. As Sarah's parents, we can't thank the AAAF enough!

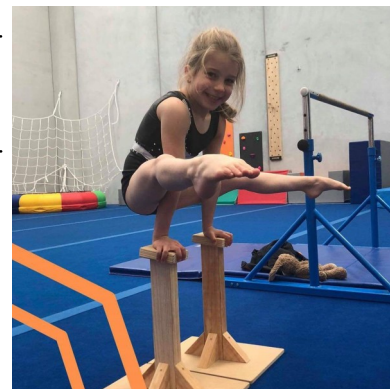
~Toni (Sarah's Mum)

We have been training really hard this term and I have learnt two routines. The first one is a balance routine where I have to stand really tall and still when I am on my partners' shoulders or hands. We do cool things like I get to do a handstand holding on to my partners' feet, and also we do "Birdie" where she lifts me up with her feet or she pops me up. I have to remember to stay really tight or else we go wobbly and fall. The second one is a dynamic routine. We do a lot of lifts and throws in that one. I have to keep my shapes so that she can catch me properly. Sometimes we do landing drills, which is where I jump off a box and my partner catches me. I'm practising my landings so that I don't lean forwards or fall down.



## **Sarah....we would like to thank the Australia Alopecia Areata Foundation for the support they have given**

I have just finished my first ever competition with Acrobatic Gymnastics. It was a practice competition in front of a judge and all of our friends and family. I had so much fun. Our new leotards arrived just in time and I felt great. My partner Tilly and I performed our two routines. I think we did an awesome job. I was very nervous at the start but all the training we have been doing meant that I knew what to do. We got a very big clap at the end from the audience and our coach said we did really well. We have a few things to keep working on but I can't wait for my next competition! I love everything about Acro.



### **July 2019**

With the AAAF Sponsorship program now at an end for Sarah, we would like to thank the Australia Alopecia Areata Foundation for the support they have given her in not only assisting financially with funds to help her grow in the sport she loves so much, through the Bronze level sponsorship, but also to help us as a family explain and normalise Sarah's alopecia for her and our community. Sarah now feels more confident talking about her patches and the people around us are now more knowledgeable about Alopecia Areata. The team at Melbourne Acrobatic Gymnastics Club have been wonderful in allowing us to display the AAAF symbol, Sarah's story, and pamphlets explaining the condition. The support we have received has made this first year of Alopecia Areata a little easier for us, so thank you AAAF!

~ Toni (Sarah's Mum)

A lot has happened to me this term. I had my birthday and turned 7, I got a good report from my teacher at school, and I got to do heaps of Acro! In Acrobatic Gymnastics I have been training really hard with my partner Tilly. We have been practising our skills, getting ready for our big competition. I was so nervous leading up to the Acro comp. I couldn't get to sleep! On the day, I felt so nervous and scared that I almost forgot to keep breathing. But when we were doing our first routine, our Balance routine, it felt really good. Then after that, I wasn't nervous at all. For our second routine, our Dynamic one, I wasn't even a little bit nervous. It was really fun competing in the competition. I can't wait to do it all over again! Oh and we came first place! I was super excited! I got a gold medal! Thanks AAAF for your sponsorship!

