



Ariana Luterman: Danny Fulgencio

## Racing for Alcove

Ariana Luterman competed in her first triathlon when she was in the second grade.

"I'm in the eighth grade now, so I've been at it a while," Ariana says matter-of-factly. Such a statement would be amusing, if it weren't for the fact that at age 13, the Far North Dallas resident competes in roughly 15 duathlons and triathlons a year. In May Ariana competed in an adult Olympic triathlon — that's a 1-mile swim, followed by a 26-mile bike ride and a 10k run — in which she beat her 2012 time by 10 minutes and won first place in the 19-and-under category. She says it was one of her favorite races this year.

Ariana fell in love with the sport when some of her friends invited her to race with them.

"Once I crossed the finished line for the first time, I was hooked — I knew that it was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life," she says.

Ariana began to garner a lot of attention as she competed and placed in numerous adult triathlons. She decided at age 11 that she wanted to move the focus away from herself and toward helping others, so she formed Team Ariana. Through the organization, which rounds up her race sponsors and serves as a vehicle to sell her Team

Ariana brand race gear, Ariana has been able to raise more than \$55,000 for Vogel Alcove. The Dallas-based charity helps support homeless children and their families through early childhood education.

Ariana has been nominated for the Outstanding Youth in Philanthropy Award at the 28th annual National Philanthropy Day Awards luncheon Nov. 15. She says she chose to raise money for Alcove after her younger sister, Gabrielle, invited Ariana to visit the children there.

"I saw these kids who didn't even have beds or pillows, and it really hit my heart," Ariana says. "I really like how I can go and read books to the people I am helping." Although her school work from Greenhill Academy and her training schedule keep her pretty busy, Ariana tries to visit Alcove as much as possible. She particularly looks forward to decorating cookies with the children at the holidays.

Ariana may seem like she's got everything together all the time, but like any kid, she does have days when she just wants to stay in bed.

"When I have those days, I just think of the kids at Alcove," she says. "When I run, I run for them — sometimes it's the only thing I think about when I'm out there."

—Whitney Thompson

**TO LEARN MORE** about Ariana Luterman and Team Ariana, visit [teamariana.com](http://teamariana.com)