

One of Triathlon's Youngest Competitors Makes Racing For Charity Her Mission

In November, triathlete Ariana Luterman completed the 19th and final event in her 2012 race schedule. For any athlete -- even the sport's top pros -- that's impressive. However, Ariana is not a pro. In fact, she's a 12-year-old middle-school student from Texas whose race schedule is driven purely by her passion for triathlon and her commitment to something even bigger and greater than the sport - helping others.

Ariana finished her season with \$37,000 - not in prize money, but in charitable donations. And by joining the Janus Charity Challenge, a charitable fundraising competition for triathletes created by global investment firm Janus, Ariana's efforts will be magnified. To view a brief video clip of Ariana, [click here](#).



Ariana Luterman, one of the youngest competitors in the Janus Charity Challenge

Not Your Typical Pre-Teen

Just as Ariana's sport is uncharacteristic of most pre-teen girls, so are her goals. She acquired a sponsorship from [Champion System](#), a leader in custom technical apparel for athletes, and began her triathlon journey. She does not race for a place at the podium, although she's been there multiple times, but for a place in the hearts of those who cheer for her from the sidelines and from home. She believes that if she can earn their respect and admiration, she might also be able to win their hearts and inspire them to support the very cause that inspires her - helping homeless children and their families find stability amidst turmoil.

Ariana dedicated her 2012 triathlon season to raising money for a nonprofit organization that provides free quality child development services to Dallas' most vulnerable residents: homeless children six weeks to five years old. She was introduced to [Vogel Alcove](#) by her younger sister Gabrielle, who had made it her personal mission to support the charity. Soon, both girls were donating their time, their attention and even their birthday gifts to the children being served by Vogel Alcove.

"When Gabrielle and I found out about Vogel and discovered that some of these kids didn't even have a room or bed to call their own, we realized just how fortunate we are," Ariana says, "and we decided to do something about it."

Shifting the Focus to Her Charity

Ariana was happy to share her good fortune with the children at [Vogel Alcove](#), but she suspected she could make a

bigger impact by spreading the word about Vogel and encouraging others to lend their support. Meanwhile, her accomplishments as one of triathlon's youngest competitors were attracting an increasing amount of local and regional attention. It wasn't something she was comfortable with, so she decided to combine her racing with fundraising in hopes of removing the spotlight from her own accomplishments, or at least sharing the spotlight with Vogel Alcove.

"I wanted the focus off of me and on a worthwhile cause," explains Ariana.

She developed a web site, teamariana.com, where people could read about her mission, learn about Vogel Alcove and follow her progress. She also shared her race-to-raise exploits with friends, neighbors and other triathletes. And any time she was in the public eye, she used the opportunity to talk about the children and families in need of Vogel Alcove's support.

Rising to the Challenge

By the time Ariana showed up for the Life Time Tri Dallas in October, she'd raised roughly \$35,000. As a sponsor of the event, Janus was at the race expo promoting the [Janus Charity Challenge](#), a competition for participants in any of the Life Time Triathlon Series who want to combine their race with fundraising and a chance to win an additional charitable contribution from Janus. (Janus awards the top fundraisers at each event with financial contributions to the athletes' designated charities.) For Ariana, it was an opportunity too good to pass up.

Among the 16 other triathletes competing in the Janus Charity Challenge at the Dallas race, Ariana's fundraising totals earned her 3rd place and an additional \$2,000 donation from Janus. "It's an amazing program and an easy opportunity to increase your fundraising totals," Ariana says. "It's also a great way to motivate people to race for a cause they care deeply about."

Since 2001, the Janus Charity Challenge has helped raise more than \$53 million for hundreds of charities, each one hand-picked by athletes.

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