



**ANNA KENNEDY, 15, and her mother, Michelle, wear orange "RSD Awareness" wristbands. Anna has been in remission from chronic regional pain syndrome for three years. The Kennedy's are building a support group to promote RSD awareness.**

SHU-LING ZHOU/OF THE NORTHWESTERN

# Overcoming the pain

## *Oshkosh teen in recovery from chronic pain illness*

BY KRISTA B. LEDBETTER  
of The Northwestern

Anna Kennedy cried almost every day of physical therapy. You're not supposed to relearn how to walk as a sixth-grader, she said.

But physical therapy wasn't the hardest part. Most people didn't believe anything was wrong with her.

"Everyone thought I was lying," Kennedy said.

She learned who her friends were, said her mother, Michelle Kennedy.

And the staff at Fox Valley Physical Therapy became her social life.

Anna Kennedy, 15, of Oshkosh broke her ankle five years ago, but a sprain of the same ankle one year later triggered a neurological syndrome called chronic regional pain syndrome that she's still affected by now as

### On the Web

■ To find out more about RSD awareness, log onto:  
[www.rsdawareness.com](http://www.rsdawareness.com)

■ Or visit the Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy Syndrome Association's Internet site at:

[www.rsd.org](http://www.rsd.org)



**ANNA KENNEDY, 15, demonstrates how to improve her ankle strength through physical therapy under the watchful eye of her physical therapist Kyle Rasmus.**

a freshman at Oshkosh North High School.

CRPS is a chronic pain disorder involving a dysfunctional response of the nervous system that may develop from a traumatic injury or a period of immobilization.

Steven J. Weisman, medical director of the pain management program at Children's Hospital of Wisconsin, said CRPS develops in both children and adults

and tends to occur in one of the extremities.

"In kids it's most common in the lower extremities probably because those areas get injured more," said Weisman, who treated Anna Kennedy.

"The hallmarks are that you might have an injury, such as an ankle sprain, and when you're healing up from the original injury your pain gets worse and

changes in quality."

In Anna Kennedy's case, her right ankle up to almost her knee became engulfed in what she described as a burning pain.

The slightest touch, even the faint rub of a Q-tip, seared, she said. She endured the pain, which left her on crutches, for a year and a half before entering remission three years ago.

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