

LFUCG employee's daughter forms scoliosis group to help others talk about the disease



Abby Rank and mother, Tiffany (Photo by Dottie Bean)

When Abby Rank first discovered she had scoliosis, the Winchester 12-year-old didn't want to talk about it. Now she not only talks about it, but she has formed a support group – the first of its kind in Kentucky – to get other girls to talk about it.

Called the Bluegrass Region Curvy Girls of Kentucky, the group seeks to help young women like Abby deal with the effects of the disease, which causes an abnormal curving of the spine. Started in August 2011, there are currently three members in addition to Abby, who is the chapter leader. You can learn more about the group and its leaders at www.curvygirlsscoliosis.com.

Abby and her mother, Tiffany Rank, an engineer with the Division of Water Quality, are trying to get the word out to other young women – and young

men – about the support group. "Abby is trying to take something unfortunate and make something good out of it and help others along the way," Tiffany said.

"Because so little is known about scoliosis, there are very few places for young women to turn to for answers and support," Abby said. To get treatment for Abby they decided to go to Wisconsin for physical therapy. To get a custom-made brace, they went to California. "No one knows what causes it," Abby said.

Curvy Girls of Kentucky is an offshoot of a national group, The Curvy Girls Scoliosis Support Group, founded by Leah Stoltz, who was 14 years old when she organized the group. It will be holding its first national convention on scoliosis in Long Island, New York this summer. Leah decided on

the name "Curvy Girls" due to the curvature of the spine.

Abby and Tiffany learned much of what they know about the disease from reading about it on the Internet. "It is particularly scary to pre-teenage and teenage girls, who are already worrying about their appearances and body shapes," says Tiffany.

"It can get kind of weird sometimes," Abby said. "In the beginning I didn't want to talk about it. Now, it's kind of fun to show my brace to people and my friends even want to try it on. It's like a piece of armor."

If you know someone who would benefit from being a part of a scoliosis support group or if you would like to donate, you can contact Tiffany Rank at (859) 737-3772 or tiffanyr@lexingtonky.gov.