At 13, Ariana Luterman has been racing in adult triathlons (and beating most of the grownups!) for the past three years. When sponsors stepped up, “I decided that I wanted to shift this attention away from me and onto a cause that was more worthwhile... to combine my two passions: the sport of triathlon and helping homeless children.”

She created Team Ariana (TeamAriana.org) in 2011 to raise awareness and funds for Vogel Alcove, a facility in Dallas, TX, that provides homeless children early education and healthcare. Ariana and her family had visited the center since she was young. “Once my sister and I realized that these children didn’t even have a bed to call their own, not even their own pillow, I knew I could make a difference. When I am racing I find a way to push harder knowing I am doing it for these children.” This year alone, Team Ariana has raised over $60,000 through corporate sponsorships and sales of Team Ariana race wear.

She loves the team aspect her effort lends the solo sport of triathlon. “It is extremely individualized and, in many ways, athletes are looking for a way to come together. Team Ariana is a platform where people can race for themselves and a common goal—to wipe out homelessness among children one race at a time.”

Others are taking notice of Ariana’s giving spirit, too. She recently won the Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes, given to 25 young Americans who make a positive impact.

Taylor continues to stand out as a girl who is comfortable in her own skin, embraces classy style and stays true to her roots in spite of the pressures of success.