

JASON'S FRIENDS

Bowlers raise money for cancer patients' families

By MELISSA DAVIDSON
Star-Tribune staff writer

CASPER — Kids know how hard it is on families who have loved ones dying of cancer — not only emotionally but financially. "It was hard when we lost Jason and we don't want it to be hard on anyone else," said sixth-grader Slade Fedore, referring to his friend who died of cancer three years ago.

He raised about \$100 worth of pledges for the Bowl for Jason's Friends Foundation fund-raiser Saturday at El Mark-O Lanes.

Another friend of Jason's, seventh-grader Danny Dundas, raised \$130 for the foundation, who said he was bowling "just to help other kids in the state."

The Bowl for Jason's Friends fund-raiser, from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., couldn't have come at a better time. Last week, four families in Wyoming came to the foundation for help. The kids, ages 3 to 17, have various types of cancer and the families need assistance.

Lisa Eades, Jason's mother and vice president of the foundation, said she expected the 800 bowlers Saturday to raise between \$40,000 to \$60,000.

The bowling fund-raiser is the biggest and most important fund-raiser Jason's Friends Foundation will have in 1999.

The creation of Jason's Friends Foundation was inspired by the life of Jason Eades. Those touched by his life wanted to honor his memory in a way that would be

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meaningful and helpful to others.

Jason was 9 years old when he died Nov. 11, 1995 after an 11-month battle with a brain stem tumor.

The Jason's Friends Foundation was established to help families in Casper and throughout Wyoming whose children are suffering with brain or spinal cord tumors or other childhood cancers, Eades said.

What started three years ago as simple acts of kindness, such as bringing meals over to the homes, turned into something more.

"We quickly realized they needed money," she said. "We're trying to make sure families don't have to lose everything."

When a family has a child with cancer, one or both parents usually have to quit their jobs, because kids have to leave Wyoming to get the care they need and parent goes with them, Eades said.

When salaries of families are cut in half, it's hard on the entire family. The founda-

tion covers numerous costs for families — except for medical.

Travel expenses, house payments, electric bills, groceries, phone bills and plane tickets, to name a few, are covered by the foundation. The foundation doesn't check financial backgrounds and there's not mounds of paperwork to fill out to receive help.

"We just don't have the red tape other agencies do," Eades said.

Jason's Friends Foundation is a non-profit corporation and funding comes entirely from private donations and grants. All of the foundation staff are volunteers and 97.3 percent of all money collected goes directly to the families who need help, Eades said.

"And that's really important because the money goes directly to families," Eades explained. "We'll do anything to keep the families together."

They are currently helping about 30 families in Wyoming with varying levels of needs.

Fedore and Dundas said their friend Jason "liked a lot of sports and outdoors stuff; and he was open to anything."

"He told jokes and had a really good sense of humor," Dundas said.

And he had a good attitude and was brave even when he was sick, Fedore said.

Dundas sums it up like this: "You have to live every day to the fullest. One day you can be here; bowling and the next day you could be gone."



DAN CEPEDA/Star-Tribune

Camille Jockisch reacts after she throws a ball during the 'Bowling with Jason's Friends' fund-raiser Saturday morning at El Mark-O Lanes in Casper.