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Brooke Eades, 11, rolls her ball down the lane during the fund-raiser Bowl for Jason's Friends at El Mark-O Lanes in Casper on Saturday.

Hundreds bowl for 'Jason's Friends'

Funds to help families cope

By TARA WESTREICHER
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For 12 hours Saturday, 224 teams bowled to raise money to help Wyoming families caring for children with cancer pay their bills.

El Marco Lanes sponsored the 4th annual fund-raiser - Bowl For Jason's Friends - which ran from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

"The money raised will be used to assist families who need help paying the rent, the phone bill or travel ex-

penses because Wyoming has no cancer center for children.

Casper does offer follow-up treatment, like chemotherapy, but that's about it, according to foundation Vice President Lisa Eades.

Parents often have to travel to Denver, Salt Lake and sometimes further to get initial treatment for their children.

"I'm not sure that everybody understands how great the need is here," said foundation co-founder Tisa Bielk. "We do because we see it, but we didn't know it until we started seeing how many kids there were that were affected in this state."

The foundation was established in 1996 in memory of Jason Eades, a

nine-year-old Casper boy who died from a malignant brain stem tumor. "Our premise is that a family doesn't have to lose everything because they've got a child diagnosed with cancer," said Eades.

And all a family in need has to do is call the foundation.

"There's no jumping through hoops - there's no real paperwork. We just need to know that there's a need and then we kind of evaluate each family initially for what it is that we can help them with," said Bielk.

"The only thing we don't address is medical bills, we can't pay those. But anything that helps keep that family thriving - rent, groceries, car payments - we address those needs in-

dividually as they come to us."

Teams of five adults or children collected pledge money and bowled for about an hour per team.

Last year, the event raised \$100,000, according to Eades.

"This year we've got about 1,000 bowlers, which is a full house. That's all we can hold," she said.

Prizes were awarded to the top eight pledge-earning adult teams and the top eight-pledge earning child teams.

Funds were also raised through a silent auction of items donated to the foundation. Participants bid on item such as artwork, furniture, Wyoming Symphony Orchestra

Please see BOWL, A9