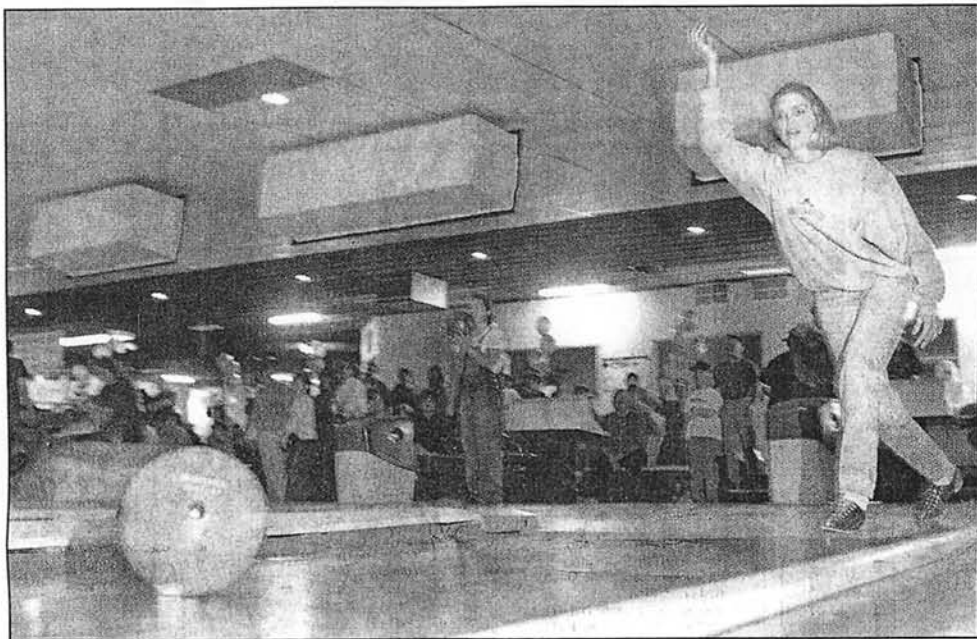


## Hitting the lanes



ROBERT HENDRICKS/Star-Tribune

Amy Radden throws her ball down the lane during the bowl for Jason's Friends fundraiser at El Mark-O Lanes in Casper on Saturday.

# Support high for Jason's Friends

## Bowl-a-thon benefits families dealing with childhood cancer

By HOLLY STROTHER  
Star-Tribune staff writer

Nine hundred-and-sixty bowlers with an additional 100 or more on a waiting list showed up to bowl for Jason's Friends on Saturday at El Mark-O Lanes in Casper.

Jason's Friends, a family support organization in Casper for families and children with childhood cancer or brain and spinal tumors, provides emotional and financial support to families around Casper and Wyoming.

"We had a great turnout last year. We made about \$65,000 from this event. I anticipate those numbers are going to be higher this year," Jason's Friends Vice President Lisa Eades said. "We actually have more people wanting to bowl than we have room for them to bowl," she added.

Eades is the mother of Jason, for whom the foundation was named. Jason was diagnosed with a brain tumor in January 1995, and fought his battle for 11 months. At age 9, he died Nov. 11, 1995.

"We are not the ones who started this foundation. It was what other people witnessed us going through physically, emotionally and financially that led to the beginning of this foundation," Eades said.

She said friends realized there was no support in Wyoming for families who have children with cancer.

"The reality is that our social services don't kick in until a family's lost just about ev-

erything," Eades said. "One of our goals is to make sure a family doesn't have to lose everything just because they've got a child with cancer."

Jason's Friends Foundation was co-founded five years ago by a friend of the family, Foundation President Tisa Bilek.

"We wanted to do something to remember him and we wanted it to be not just a plaque on the wall, but something that would impact the community and make a difference," Bilek said.

Bilek said they started small, providing meals to families and doing day-to-day things. The effort has blossomed, and now can supply rental assistance, travel expenses and help with family bills.

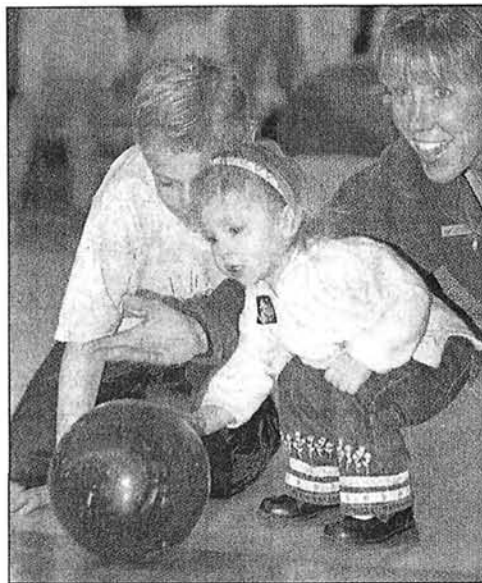
The group also can provide emotional support and get counseling for the families.

Bilek said local pediatricians, hospitals in Denver and members of the community usually tip them off to families in need.

"Once a family gets diagnosed they're immediately sent out of town, so most of the time the contact is not made by the family," Bilek said.

Bilek said the foundation recently was able to fly a family and their child to Denver for treatment. The mother had been disabled in a car accident and neither parent drove.

Bilek said instead of sending them down on the bus, which would have been an all-



ROBERT HENDRICKS/Star-Tribune

One-year-old Mackenzie Chadderdon gives a gentle push to her bowling ball with help from her mother, Jennifer, and friend Bryan Wolfe, 10, at the bowl for Jason's Friends fundraiser.

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LISA EADES, JASON'S FRIENDS FOUNDATION VICE PRESIDENT

night ride, McMurray Energy donated its company plane to fly the family round-trip.

"An event like today is pretty indicative the kind of support when you get 1,000 bowlers out, but it's the corporate sponsors, the lane sponsors, and the

1,000 bowlers, plus all the people who put money in those packets for the 1,000 bowlers," Eades said.

"It has really touched a lot of people and I think that a lot of people are trying to and are doing a lot to help out Jason's Friends."