



Sarah Beth Barnett, Star-Tribune

Clay Loraas, 9, and his sister, Heather, enjoy an after-school snack at their grandmother Marilyn Loraas's house on Wednesday afternoon.

Bowl for Jason's Friends

Bowling skill not even a consideration

By **SALLY ANN SHURMUR**
Star-Tribune staff writer

Karel Loraas says she and her husband, Jack, were willing to lose their house and their car when their son Clay was diagnosed with leukemia in June 1999 at the age of 2.

"He was so small, you just go do what you need to do," Karel said. "Losing the house, losing a car, that's not a big deal when you need to be with your child."

The Loraases received help from Jason's Friends Foundation in 1999. They did not lose their house or their car, and are now steadfast supporters of the Casper group that helps Wyoming families who have children diagnosed with brain or spinal cord tumors.

The foundation's largest fundraiser of the year is Saturday, when bowlers and those who think they are gather at El Mark-o Lanes from 10 a.m. to 10

Bowl for Jason's Friends

- **When:** Saturday, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.
- **Where:** El Mark-o Lanes
- **Cost:** \$50 minimum in pledges per bowler
- **Who:** Five-person teams
- **Find out:** Packets available at First Interstate, Hilltop and US Bank locations, El Mark-o Lanes or online at www.jasonsfriends.com
- **Info:** 235-3421

p.m. Having raised pledges previous to Saturday, they'll bowl for less than an hour for each five-person team, enjoy food, drink and door prizes and be eligible to win really good prizes based on the pledges they've raised.

"We try to do all we can for them," Karel Loraas said of the group. "His dad has a team, I have a team, we compete against each other and Clay will be there, right in the middle of all of it."

Clay is now a third-grader at Poison Spider Elementary School.

On the two-year anniversary of the end of his treatment therapy, in April 2002, Clay relapsed and underwent a bone marrow transplant in July 2002.

Every six months even now, the family travels to Denver for a checkup.

"We pay a lot of travel expenses," said Lisa Eades, executive director of Jason's Friends Foundation and mother of Jason, the foundation's namesake, who died in November 1995 at age 9 of a brain stem tumor.

"There is no primary cancer treatment for children available in the state, and so travel expenses become huge," Eades said. "But we also cover things to keep everything afloat at home. We've paid for groceries, mortgage payments, rent payments, utilities, keep vehicles running so they can get to out-of-town appointments, you name it, we've probably paid for it."

The foundation helped 50 Wyoming

families in 2005, Eades said, and asks just a minimum of \$50 per bowler to participate in Saturday's event.

Nearly 1,000 bowlers raised \$165,000 last year, and Eades said the goal is to reach those numbers again.

Even though the event is Saturday, Eades said folks can still participate by raising pledge money and filling out a packet that's available at any First Interstate Bank, Hilltop Bank or US Bank location, as well as at El Mark-o Lanes on CY Avenue and on the foundation's Web site.

"We do need them to bring their pledges on Saturday, but people are willing to help right up to the last minute," Eades said.

For more information, call 235-3421 or visit the Web site at www.jasonsfriends.com.

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