

KELLY KALL

TROY PUBLICATIONS
FEBRUARY ISSUE

Bowling to create a better tomorrow

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There is a guardian angel in the state of Wyoming that is helping save families and keep everything from falling apart. When a child is diagnosed with cancer or a type of childhood tumor, Jason's Friends Foundation steps in with a lending hand giving financial help and support in the darkest of hours. Jason's Friends Foundation gives light.

"When a child is diagnosed with cancer in Wyoming they immediately are forced to travel to seek medical attention because there is no primary cancer treatment center in Wyoming," said Lisa Eades, president and cofounder of Jason's Friends Foundation. The financial burden that strikes a family when a child is diagnosed is catastrophic and often can tear families apart. Jason's Friends Foundation is an all volunteer non-profit organization in place to make sure that families do not have to lose everything they have and can focus on what is truly important- their child. Jason's Friends pays for things like traveling expenses, gas, hotels, food, airfare, house payments, rent payments, electric bills, gas bills and water bills. They help keep vehicles running, keep food on the tables and put clothes on the families' backs.

There is no doubt that Jason's Friends has made a huge difference in



Wyoming assisting hundreds of families and giving anywhere from a couple thousand dollars to over thirty thousand dollars to a single family. They have grown to become widely known and supported.

Jason's Friends Foundation was created in the memory of Jason Eades. He was a high spirited and beautiful son of Rocky and Lisa Eades. When he was nine years old he was diagnosed with a brain tumor and immediately fled to New York City to seek treatment. In November of 1995, Jason lost a yearlong battle with a tumor that claimed his life. After witnessing first hand the struggles and heartbreaks that a family endures, Lisa Eades and friends of the family created a foundation in Jason's memory to help families throughout the state fight one of the toughest battles imaginable. Jason's Friends Foundations gives families hope, courage and strength in a time when optimism is scarce and fear is everywhere.

This love created by the foundation has spread through communities around Wyoming and the support they have

received is unbelievable. From one dollar to thousands the people of Wyoming never hesitate to help. The foundation has also received national recognition from the Garth Brooks Foundation and people around the country. They are not only giving to families but also creating awareness for childhood cancer on a national level. Their biggest fundraiser of the year is called Bowl for Jason's Friends, and it will take place on March 1, 2008 at El Marko Lanes in Casper. It is a fun filled day of bowling, prizes and pizza while helping children with cancer. Bowlers collect pledges prior to bowling and can receive prizes for collecting the most money in a both a youth and adult age group. Free food and prizes will be given out all day at the event. Simply by collecting fifty dollars, a bowler can receive a free Jason's Friends tee shirt, which has become highly popular throughout Casper. All one has to do is gather a team of five bowlers (no skills necessary), sign up for a time to bowl, collect donations and bowl for an hour on March 1st. It is simple fun and all for a good cause.

The more money collected the better. This fundraiser brings almost 1000 bowlers together to raise money for the foundation.

"It is our primary fundraiser for the entire year, and our goal is to beat the \$230,000 we raised last year while providing a fun day of bowling for the volunteer bowlers," said Lisa Eades.

If for some reason a person wants to help and compete for prizes, but will be gone the day of the event they can be "phantom bowlers" and pick up a pledge packet, collect donations and still compete for the prizes.

To pick up a team pledge packet visit First Interstate Bank, Hilltop Bank, US Bank, El Marko Lanes or Jason's Friends Office and for questions feel free to call the Jason's Friends Office at 235-3421.

Jason's Friends Foundation is creating better lives for families who have children with cancer. They are that light in the darkness, that glimmer of hope and a guardian angel in times of need. In memory of a boy who always showed more concern for others, and faced his illness with a dignity beyond his years, Jason's Friends continues his tradition and his legacy.

"He taught us how to overcome any obstacle with strength and courage," said Lisa Eades. Help the families of Wyoming overcome their obstacles and bowl for Jason's Friends.