



Jacob's Journey

by Cathy Werner

Make-A-Wish Foundation recently granted Jacob Dinkel's wish to Restore his grandfather's first tractor. Funding from Make-A-Wish, several donations, and the collaboration of selfless volunteers prevailed. It is all about Teamwork—Working tirelessly, with unspoken enthusiasm for a common goal: To help make Jacob's wish come true.



Making a wish...
Jacob's 13th birthday
April 18, 2010
Photo by Linda Dinkel



Char Hamblin, Northfield
Photo by Cathy Werner



Jacob aboard his grandfather's tractor.
Photo by Mike Werner



Photo by Mike Werner



Photo by Joe Miller Photography
www.joemillerphotography.com



Rice County Steam and Gas Engines, Inc. club members who worked together on the restoration of Jacob's grandfather's Ford 8N tractor. L to R: Roger Caron, Carl Harvey, Chuck Peterson, Dick Sundahl, Curt Piper. Center: Jacob Dinkel.
Photo courtesy of Joe Miller Photography www.joemillerphotography.com



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Jacob and Linda Dinkel
Photo by Cathy Werner

In July 2009, 12 year old Jacob Dinkel was leaning forward in a chair, playing a computer game, when his mother, Linda, noticed a lump on his back. She didn't worry too much about it, "because bumps and bruises are typical of boys," Linda said. By the end of July, the bump was still there. She took Jacob to a doctor, who referred him to see a surgeon. On August 21, Jacob was diagnosed with Ewing's sarcoma at Mayo Clinic, Rochester. His course of chemotherapy treatments began the next week. It would change this farm boy's life forever. Jacob loves to farm. His favorite thing to do on the farm is to "drive the 826 tractor pulling a disc," he grinned. It was hard news for Jacob to be told that he could not farm right now.

Jacob's Journey continued...

"Part of me hates to admit that a "thing" could lift someone's spirits so much...A wish is something more than a want. It embodies more of who that person "is," Linda Dinkel stated. She decided to apply to Make-A-Wish on Jacob's behalf. "After the wish child qualifies, two wish granters (volunteers) are assigned to make a personal visit with the child and family. After the interview, the wish request goes to the MAW Minneapolis office for approval," explained Jim Wenzel, who serves on the Board of Directors, MN Chapter of MAW. On March 8, 2010, Jacob qualified for Make-A-Wish, granting his wish to restore his grandfather's Ford 8N tractor. "Jacob is a true farm kid at heart," according to Jim Wenzel, who is also a Wish parent.

Linda Dinkel emailed Rob Rinaldi, publisher and editor of Ford Tractors N-News in Vermont to find assistance from people in Central Minnesota familiar with restoring the Ford 8N. Rob contacted Char Hamblin, daughter of the late Palmer Fossum, Northfield, Minnesota, a Ford tractor collector and enthusiast. Char contacted Jeff Fox, who owns a body shop nearby, who immediately replied, "Sure, I'd love to be part of this!" Char also contacted Bill Becker, president of Rice County Steam and Gas Engines, Inc., who could think of three guys off the top of his head who would offer their shops for the repairs. Jeff Fox contacted Dan Christopherson at the Northfield NAPA store, who offered to donate paint for the tractor. Bill Becker said Lindahl Tire in Cannon Falls offered to donate new rubber for the tractor. According to Char, "The generous offers in that first day were coming out of the woodwork!" Used Ford tractor parts were provided by her brother, Loren Fossum. Make-A-Wish Foundation volunteer, Jim Wenzel was also very instrumental in making the connections required to help this farm boy's wish to come true! As Jim stated, "Most people can buy most any thing they want, but only Make-A-Wish has the special touch to make special things magical."

Jacob's last chemotherapy treatment was on April 21 in Rochester. Jacob poses above with the Rice County Steam and Gas Engines, Inc. (www.ricecountysteamandgas.com) club members who volunteered their time and expertise to help make Jacob's wish come true.

Jacob lives with his family just outside of Long Prairie, Minnesota. His parents, Charlie and Linda, have 4 other children: Emily 20, a sophomore in college, Rebecca 18, John 15, Jacob 13 (on April 18th) and Carolyn 10. They run a small organic dairy farm and also make and sell maple syrup. Being home schooled, Jacob has been able to help on the farm, "driving tractors since the age of eight," according to Linda. By the time Jacob was 3 years old, "he could name all of our tractors, what implements were used for what purpose...and what the neighbors owned too!" exclaimed Linda.

"Jacob is thankful to Make-A-Wish. It has given him a lot of enjoyment just thinking about what he might wish for." Linda added, "It [Make-A-Wish] is a wonderful program that truly gives each child something else to focus on during such a scary, unpredictable time."