



Woods-Water and Wildlife

A Newsletter For The Sportsmen Of... INTERNATIONAL  PAPER

Catching an Outdoor Dream

(Editor's Note: While International Paper supports numerous conservation and outdoor-oriented programs across the United States, perhaps none is as rewarding at a personal level as our involvement with "Catch-A-Dream." IP is proud to be a supporting partner with CAD, and we look forward to helping many more children "catch their outdoor wish.")

Bruce Brady, a Mississippi attorney, sculptor, poet and outdoor writer, was an icon in the outdoor world. As a field editor for Outdoor Life magazine, and free-lance correspondent for several other publications, he hunted and fished across the continent. Countless readers re-lived those adventures with him as they read his skillfully crafted works for more than three decades.

Brady's bronze sculptures adorn the display shelves of many prominent collectors, and a Brady Bronze is among the most sought after of any wildlife sculptures.

Many of Brady's fondest experiences were hunting and fishing with family and friends. As the father of three and grandfather of 13, he was especially aware of the need to provide young people with opportunities to enjoy the wonder of nature. As Brady faced his own arduous battle with cancer, he took



DREAMS DO COME TRUE: Catch-A-Dream takes youth with life-threatening illnesses on their outdoors dream adventures.

great comfort in time spent in the outdoors. He drew strength from these experiences, and was able to "recharge his batteries" as he hunted and fished in his last days. Shortly before his death, Brady spoke of his vision for a program that would provide outdoor opportunities to youth with life-threatening illnesses who, unfortunately, were no longer served by another prominent wish-granting organization.

He felt a great burden for these children who, when faced with physical challenges similar to his own, may not have the opportunity to experience their outdoor adventure.

Brady, like many who love the outdoors, was disappointed that the Make-a-Wish Foundation had been forced to abandon this

segment of our youth population who wanted to experience a hunting and fishing adventure, and sought to establish a mechanism whereby all children who suffered from life-threatening illness could still be granted these types of wishes if they desired.

He shared this vision with several close friends and family members, including long-time friend and Cliff Covington. Cliff immediately initiated discussions with both the Board of Directors for the Mississippi Wildlife Federation and administrators within the MSU-Extension Service to determine the feasibility of developing such a program. Both MWF and MSU-ES recognized the opportunity that such a program presented, **DREAMS, Page 8**

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Dr. Ron Brown, then-Director of MSU-ES, provided early leadership for conception of the program.

Brady lost his battle with cancer in February 2000, as initial plans were being laid to establish a program that he had already dubbed "Catch-A-Dream." But his family and friends were dedicated to creating Catch-A-Dream as a memorial to him that would eternally provide a message of hope at a time when children with life-threatening illnesses need to know that hope does indeed exist.

In mid-2000, the Bruce Brady Memorial Catch-A-Dream Program was founded as a unique and unprecedented partnership among the Brady family, the MSU-Extension Service, the Mississippi Wildlife Federation and the Mississippi 4-H Clubs' Foundation. The Catch-A-Dream mission is to provide eligible children and youth the opportunity to "catch their outdoor dream" while providing spiritual encouragement that is so often needed by these children.

The Catch-A-Dream Board of Directors has day-to-day responsibility for the implementation of the program through the Field and Stream program, and with fiscal accountability to the 4-H Foundation Board and the Brady family. The Board of Directors functions to ensure perpetual commitment to the program, prescribe modes of authority, and ensure long-term stability and existence of the program from an administrative oversight standpoint.

To date, the Catch-A-Dream program is 100 percent volunteer driven.

Catch-A-Dream becomes aware of a



CREATING SMILES: Catch-A-Dream program has made outdoor dreams come true for boys and girls across the country.

child's wish through referrals, which are accepted from parents and guardians or medical and social work professionals.

Eligibility requirements are simple: the child must be a U.S. resident, under the age of 18, and suffer from a life-threatening illness.

The vision of serving our nation's seriously ill children requires many partners. Basic funding comes from the generosity of donors who have caught the vision. A significant portion of the cost of each wish comes from

in-kind contributions from many partner companies, organizations, and outfitters and outdoors enthusiasts who become a part of each child's wish experience. From its inception, the program has enjoyed support from the outdoor industry, with primary leadership from Mossy Oak. Mossy Oak has provided financial and in-kind contributions that

enabled Catch-A-Dream to quickly become a national program, and remains the most significant partner in a constantly expanding list of Supporting Partners from the outdoor manufacturing industry and outfitters nationwide.

The first Catch-A-Dream adventure took place in January 2001 when a 17-year-old boy with T-Cell Lymphoma fulfilled his life dream of hunting white-tailed deer at Mossy Oak's famous Lee Haven Plantation in West Alabama. Since that time, Catch-A-Dream has served children and their families in 13 states with hunting and fishing adventures ranging from Alaska to the Gulf of Mexico, and the list of candidate children continues to expand!



Help a youth



'Catch A Dream'

How can you help make a child's outdoor wish come true? You can support Catch-A-Dream in many ways. Among them are:

- Refer an eligible child to the program. If you know a child who is eligible, contact CAD.

- Volunteer. Catch-A-Dream keeps a list of individuals and organizations willing to help host hunting or fishing trip in their local area. This can range from simply providing transportation, supporting the child during the hunting or fishing trip or keeping in contact with the family after the outdoor adventure.

- Direct program support. Contributions are tax-deductible, and all monies will go directly to making wishes come true. In-kind donations of equipment, access to hunting or fishing adventures, and other logistical support are also welcome.

- Spread the word. Tell a friend, your hunting club or your local chapter or organization about Catch-A-Dream. Help get information in a local newspaper. Catch-A-Dream is successful when an eligible child gets to experience their own outdoor wish. We want to make as many of those wishes as possible come true.



To learn more about the Catch-A-Dream program, go online at www.catchadream.org or contact Dr. Marty Brunson at (662) 325-3174 or by e-mail at martyb@ext.msstate.edu