



Making a Difference with Catch-A-Dream

Editor's Note: We were copied on this letter from Dennis Brune to Dr. Marty Brunson at Catch-A-Dream. We're sharing it as a small, but important, example of the power individuals have to improve the lives of others, and that we all can teach, inspire, and accomplish much more than we think we can. Whitetails Unlimited has been very involved for many years with Catch-A-Dream, which provides outdoor adventures to seriously ill children. There have been some minor edits to the original letter.

Hello Dr. Brunson:

I'm pleased to let you know Jake, with some help from his family, surpassed his goal of raising \$4,500 (actual amount was \$4,580), so hopefully this will be enough to send one youngster on a hunt-of-a-lifetime!

Being a pretty average Midwesterner, bragging about accomplishments is not something I normally do, but I'm a pretty proud dad and grandpa, so I'm going to share with you a little bit of the story of what brought this to fruition. I'm also copying some of the partners at Whitetails Unlimited and the Drury Brothers that I feel were a part of making this happen.

Back in May, my wife and I attended the WTU banquet in Jefferson City, along with my daughter, Sarah Eckelkamp, her husband Doug, and their three young boys, Jake, Bryce, and



Luke. At one point during the evening we snapped a nice photo with "the boys"!

Dan Vogt, the WTU Field Director, frequently (maybe always!) starts off the live auction with the Catch-A-Dream 'Dream Shed' antlers that the Drury Brothers have donated. I was the lucky high bidder, and at some point after the banquet, Jake (Sarah and Doug's oldest son) started asking questions

about "Why would Grandpa buy antlers that have writing on them!?" Sarah and Doug explained the story behind Catch-A-Dream, and the partnership with WTU and the Drury Brothers. Since our family is blessed with excellent health, explaining one of life's tougher lessons – that not all families are as lucky as ours – was a little bit of a challenge, but the boys, and especially Jake, got it. Doug, knowing we were all traveling to Ft. Worth for the Duck's Unlimited Expo, asked Jake if he wanted to help with a fundraiser for Catch-A-Dream, and Jake immediately said, "Yes!" Remembering that Dan mentioned at the WTU banquet



that the average cost to send one youngster on a Catch-A-Dream hunt was \$4,500, that immediately became our goal.

So off to Texas we headed, with our banners, hats, and enthusiasm! The weather was a little bit hot, but the boys were real troopers and hung in there. After the DUX event, we were a little bit shy of our goal, so upon returning home, Sarah jumped on social media, sharing the message, and it didn't take long before we reached our goal.

So below is the final pic, showing Jake with one of the checks we'll be sending in, and Bryce with the antlers that helped get this story started. As I said above, I'm very proud of my family, but I want all of you to know that I'm equally proud of all of you, for being part of this.

Jeff Schinkten (WTU president) and Dan – we really appreciate it that you make this such an important part of your banquets and give us a chance to help in a small way. Mark and Terry (Drury brothers) – you probably think your contribution is "small," but I can tell



you from our story, that your antlers were that little extra "spark" that allowed this to take root. And Dr. Brunson – you and your organization deserve a huge THANKS for this amazing work you folks do. An old guy like me sometimes thinks our society heads down rabbit holes that are counterproductive, but seeing this example unfold gives me hope that there are still plenty of amazing people doing some awesome things. 🐾

**For more information
about Catch-A-Dream,
visit their website at
catchadream.org**