Sixteen-year-old Hunter Ridenoir, a Dickson County High School sophomore, bagged a black bear in a recent hunt in Wisconsin. Soon, he will have a reminder of the event.

The head of the 249-pound bear, which he killed with one shot from a 12-gauge shotgun, is being mounted for his bedroom wall.

Ridenour, who was diagnosed with Asperger’s Disorder when he was in elementary school, got the chance to go on the black bear hunt through United Special Sportsman Alliance, a charity that sends terminally ill or disabled children on outdoor adventures.

Asperger’s is an autistic spectrum disorder sometimes referred to as high-functioning disorder.

The disorder usually isn’t diagnosed until between the ages of nine and 12.

“He was like a walking fishing encyclopedia,” Sheryl said. “But after fishing many children’s tournaments and kind of outgrowing them, I was desperate for help. As a single parent, I really needed someone who could involve him in outdoor activities that I knew nothing about.”

After finding out about the USSA, she cross-referenced everything she could to get more information. She found out the organization had served about 4,000 children with outdoor adventures.

Her son went on his first hunt last October.

“It’s a wonderful organization to be in. They’ve taken me to Wisconsin twice. I’ve gone to Illinois where I killed my first deer,” the teen said.

The hunting trips are great, he added.

“It’s fun. It gets your adrenaline pumped up. When I shot my first animals, I got so excited,” he said.

His mother can really see a difference since he became involved with USSA. She said he has more friends at school now because kids find out about his hunting trips through the USSA.