MAKING A DIFFERENCE, part 3

Starting in our IBS Spring 2003 newsletter, we shared with you a conversation and article from Brigid O'Dognohue about her project of helping out children and young adults that wished to be taken on hunts. These people are seriously ill folks that we are trying to lend just enough help so that they can experience a hunt that you and I might too often take for granted, with our good health. Our IBS role for 2003 will be to try to help Brigid reach her goal of 100+ Dream Hunts. As we shared with you at that time, we will be working with the Illinois DNR to help make this happen.

We truly wish to help out our community as our President, Kevin Chapman says “Spread our wings” a bit in this endeavor. The present IBS board probably doesn’t know of a similar 1996 project that several of us took on related to single parent kids that needed a bit of help for them to realize their dream of hunting. That program involved Damian Consodine, Ray Thompson, myself and our IBS president working with an enthusiastic landowner. This project was called Archers Influencing Maturity (AIM) and it targeted youths that wanted to hunt but did not have the luxury of having experience/support from both their parents. Our most generous member of this team was a Winnebago County landowner who was willing to donate a weekend of his land & facilities to the cause. This project unfortunately never got off the ground and we were not proactive enough quickly to take the opportunity that was offered to us. I am sorry to tell you that our generous landowner member, was taken from us and his family by cancer. I would like to think that ole Bob Torttstenson is looking down on us smiling as we start into this project that we hope to be an annual event.

"Hunting is a heritage that has had a deep impact on the life of each of us"

In our Summer Newsletter, I gave you some more information and hoped to have timing for this hunt set up earlier in the year so that the weather was easier on these kids. Our DNR has come through with a site and some ground blinds for the hunt but, they were unable to get all the details to pull this hunt off sometime in October. The 2003 Illinois Dream Hunt will be the first firearm season, November 21st - 23rd. Our DNR was able to get special permits fro these special kids to allow them to hunt this year. The DNR is still working on the details of where the hunt will happen. As of this writing, the most likely spot is in southern Illinois’s Saline County on newly acquired DNR land.

Brigid, through her United Special Sportsmen’s Alliance (USSA) has sent some information on the kids for this year’s hunt. The kids are all over the map as far as geographically and age. Our youngest hunter is nine years old with two 12 year old family members from Kansas with Cystic Fibrosis looking forward to the hunt. Our oldest to date is a 17 year old from North Carolina who needs a heart valve replacement or transplant. Their goals are many times greater than ours. Others are from Oklahoma, Missouri, and Illinois that share some challenges in life. Theirs’ is to bravely battle