Ryan’s dream comes true, fisherman for a day!

By Beth Wilbanks

Ryan Novy is 12 years old. He loves sports, he loves music, and when he hears it he dances and sings along to it, he is a total and complete ham in front of a camera, (he can’t get enough of snapping his own pictures) he loves his family and his pets, he loves giving hugs and kisses and making people laugh, and Ryan, of rural Kendall, also has Down Syndrome.

This summer Ryan got involved with United Special Sportsmen Alliance (USSA), which is a non-profit Christian organization that routinely coordinates with other caring organizations worldwide in fulfilling a dream or wish. USSA takes disabled and terminally ill children on dream hunting, fishing, camping and canoeing trips. Working with deer, elk, turkey, bear, and pheasant farms and property owners as well as preserves and ranches has made hunting, fishing, and outdoor adventures possible nationwide.

Ryan spent fishing at the lake is a normal occurrence, but for children like Ryan and the other kids involved with USSA, it’s a dream come true.

Ryan is a very active young man. One of his favorite past times is Special Olympics. He participates in the 50 meter dash and in 2003 he was the State Champion in the softball throwing event. Although Ryan loves just about anything that keeps him moving, there is one thing he will sit still for, and that is fishing!

Kim Little, the Special Olympics director out of Viroqua clued Ryan into a very special fishing event that was being put on by USSA. She sent a brochure and application home with Ryan one day and he excitedly showed it to his mom and dad.

“He has been ‘fishing’ ever since he was very little,” Ryan’s mom Cheryl revealed. “He’d pick up items around the house and outside and he’d just start acting like he was casting a fishing rod.

Sometimes he wouldn’t even need anything in his hands, he’d just sit there and cast and reel back in.” Ryan also gets into professional fishing. “We have to watch every single fishing show on the television.”

Cheryl knew that this event would be perfect for Ryan so she immediately palsy, ADHD, Down syndrome, and Cystic Fibrosis.

USSA’s headquarters is situated on 1,200 acres 15 miles from Black River Falls. There were private lakes for waterskiing, tubing, jet-skiing, and canoeing. There were also ponds stocked with fish, including walleye, bass, bluegills and catfish. It was a really big fish! Ryan was very excited to show off the 12 inch Walleye that he reeled in with the help of Jack.

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“buddy” to sit with them and help them fish all day long. As the day progressed the professional fishermen went from child to child teaching them a little bit about their skill, and learning a bit about each pupil as well.

Ryan’s fishing buddy was Jack Freehill of Sauk City. Freehill pointed out. “He loved casting. He just kept casting it out and then reeling it back in right away. I tried to everything all day long. I think it had a lot to do with the fact that he is SO into fishing and he watches the shows and really gets into it, and this day he was actually doing it.”

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