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PLYMOUTH COUNTY'S NEWSPAPER

'When you wish upon a star'

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By Beverly Van Buskirk, Lifestyles editor



(Sentinel Photo by Beverly Van Buskirk) Make-A-Wish has granted Skylar Olson (center) and her family their wish to go to Disney World in Orlando. From left are — Make-A-Wish volunteer and wish granter Cassidy Davis as Snow White, Jayden Olson, Jordyn Olson, dad and mom Justin and Trista Olson, Wyatt Olson and volunteer and wish granter Collette Delperdang.

LE MARS — It's not every little girl who gets greeted by Snow White at the Blue Bunny Ice Cream Parlor, but that's what happened for five-year-old Skylar Olson Thursday.

The Make-A-Wish Foundation has granted Skylar's wish to visit Disney World in Florida.

Thursday's party included balloons, Disney gifts and of course, ice cream.

Attending were Skylar's parents, Justin and Trista Olson, her sister, Jordyn, 8, and brothers, Jayden, 9 and Wyatt, 3, Make-A-Wish volunteers and local Farm Bureau Financial Services representative Mark Frentress.

Trista explained Skylar has a rare gene disorder, Cornelia de Lange Syndrome.

"She has it on the mild side. She wears glasses and has hearing aids for a mild hearing loss," Trista said. "She doesn't speak, I guess she says one word, 'stop,' and she does do a few sign language words like eat, drink and more."

Trista said Skylar was six months old before a definite diagnosis was made.

"We finally saw a genetic doctor in Omaha and she knew what it was right away," Trista said.

Skylar is in her third year of preschool and will go to kindergarten at Franklin in the fall.

Trista found out about Make-A-Wish through Facebook connections with parents of children with the syndrome.

She said she contacted Make-A-Wish, and the entire process took about three months.

The wish is also possible because of support from the Iowa Agents Association with Farm Bureau Financial Services.

Local agent Mark Frentress serves as president of the agents organization.

He explained the group held a charity auction in February at its awards banquet.

"We gathered items to bid on and raised about \$24,000. This was our first year for doing this," Frentress said.

"We decided we wanted to give back to the community so we contacted Make-A-Wish," he said. "We said we would like to give two wishes away, one in western Iowa and one in eastern Iowa. Our Le Mars family was chosen, as was a family from Cedar Rapids."

Jenny Schroeder, western Iowa Community Development Manager for the Make-A-Wish organization, was also at the presentation.

“We love what we do and are able to do it because of you,” Schroeder told Frentress and the group gathered. “We don’t get money from the government, we rely on our community partners. We want you to know how much we appreciate it.”

Schroeder said the wish affects more than just the child and family.

“I don’t know that I can put it in words. When we grant a wish for a family, it doesn’t just change the kid’s life, it changes their family’s life, it changes the volunteers’ lives, by getting to meet this family,” she said. “We hear it impacts their quality of life, it impacts their ability to get through treatment, so there’s really not one thing that it does but it’s life changing.”

Wish granter Collette Delperdang worked with the family to get the wish.

“We get the fun job of meeting the family and doing the initial paperwork and sending it to the wish coordinator. Once the coordinator does the hard work of putting it all together we get to go and say here’s your trip.”

Wish granter Cassidy Davis came to the event dressed as Snow White.

“It’s a great thing to do,” Davis said. “It’s inspiring meeting the child and seeing the look on their face.”

The Olson family is excited about the trip.

“We will get to see the amusement park, Universal Studios, Sea World and LegoLand,” Trista said.

“Skylar’s special thing is she is getting to be a princess for a day, will have her hair done, makeup, a gown, everything,” Trista said.

Skylar and her sister Jordyn, watch Disney movies together.

“I know they watch Dory a lot, Beauty and the Beast and Lion King,” she added.

The family will be making the seven day trip in May.

Schroeder said wishes are granted for children who have some type of life-threatening condition. “Most of our children are not terminal,” she said.

She also thanked everyone Thursday for “being a part of this craziness.”

“This right here is why we do what we do,” said Frentress as he looked at Skylar. “I hope you guys have a great time with it. I’m glad we could be part of your wish.”