

News

TAYLOR: Make-A-Wish recipient gets chance to spend more time with family (with video)

Saturday, December 11, 2010

By Rene Cizio

TAYLOR — Sometimes wishes do come true.

Destiny Caruso, a 7-year-old, living with a debilitating brain condition, made a wish to spend more time with friends and family. Now, thanks to Macy's and the Make-A-Wish Foundation, she can.

The Taylor resident has anoxic brain injury and a congenital condition known as CdLS — Cornelia de Lange syndrome. There is no cure for CdLS, which is present at birth.

Destiny is legally blind and has seizures, along with the effects of cerebral palsy and sleep apnea.

Despite her challenges, she loves to be outside with her mom, Kerry Caruso, as well as with other relatives and friends.

Destiny's true wish was for a pop-up camper to make those trips easier and more fun. Her wish came true Friday.

"Destiny is nonverbal, but what Destiny loves best is to be around other people and children," Caruso said.

Caruso said all of her friends and family are in Maine, Ohio and Iowa, and Destiny wanted to spend more time visiting them, but travel is difficult for her.

"Because of Destiny's syndrome, I have to protect her from germs, so it's nice to have a pop-up camper," Caruso said.

Destiny already has had pneumonia three times this year, Caruso said.

She said Destiny loves to be outdoors and camping is a favorite pastime of theirs. Now, they'll be able to do it in a safer, more comfortable way, she said.

"All my friends have pop-up campers and we would go join them, but we only had a tent," Caruso said.

The severity of CdLS ranges from mild to severe, but all people with CdLS share similar characteristics, such as small stature, hands, feet and head; joined eyebrows; long eyelashes; upturned nose; and thin, downturned lips.

It is expected that most children with CdLS will live

into adulthood, but it is not uncommon for them to have other life-threatening conditions.

Caruso didn't find out that Destiny had the condition until after she was born.

Caruso said her daughter also had a four-hour seizure when she was just a few months old and it caused her brain damage and blindness.

She said the biggest issue right now is Destiny's sleep apnea because she can't wear a mask and caregivers can only put an oxygen tube in her nose to help her breathe through the night.

"It's scary if she's going to wake up some days," Caruso said.

During the Make-A-Wish Foundation presentation at Macy's at Southland Center, 23000 Eureka, Destiny received her camper and dozens of brightly wrapped presents to outfit it — and her.

Her mother said she can see some bright, contrasting colors, lights and sparkles, and her presents were all as bright and sparkly as could be.

While Macy's stores all over the country were hosting wishes Friday, it was the first time the Taylor store had the opportunity.

"She's from Taylor, so it's really nice to see it back in the community," said Pat Hermes, the store's manager.

Caruso said the family's first trip in the new camper will likely be to the Toledo Zoo and camping at Maumee Bay State Park.

Caruso said she is grateful to Macy's and Make-A-Wish. She said what they have done for her and her daughter is wonderful.

"I'm so happy we have a camper so we can go visit family," she said. "Every weekend we're going to try to get away."

Since it began in 1984, the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Michigan — a chapter of the Make-A-Wish Foundation of America — has affected thousands of people in the state. There are more than 500 medically eligible Michigan kids awaiting their true wishes.

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