

**MORE THAN
INCHES!**



Jacob Grunewald is ten years old. He attends fourth grade at Georgetown Elementary in Jenison, Michigan and he likes playing center and noseguard positions on his schools football team. He also likes spaghetti but he doesn't like meatloaf or tacos. As you can tell, Jacob's the type of kid who knows what he wants and when he sets his mind to accomplishing a goal, you can consider it done. So, when the opportunity to fulfill a hunting dream became possible, Jacob was more than ready for the arduous task that lay ahead of him.

Anyone that has ever hunted elk knows how difficult it can be, even when you're in good shape. Now think about trying to hunt for elk when you have an illness that at times doesn't allow enough blood to flow to your brain. At five years of age Jacob was diagnosed with Fibromuscular Dysplasia, an arterial disease that causes strokes. Jacob knows what having a stroke is like; he's already had two in his short life. He also has to take blood thinner medicine everyday, but all this hasn't stopped this inspiring young man from realizing his dream; a dream to go west to hunt the majestic bull elk.

“Thanks a lot for all that you did!”

— By Stephanie Rainey —

Jacob began his hunting adventure in Springerville, Arizona in October of 2006. He was able to achieve his dream through an organization called Hunt of a Lifetime (HOAL). HOAL is a non-profit organization that fulfills hunting and fishing wishes for children 21 years and younger who have a life-threatening illness. Jacob's father Eric contacted Tina Pattison, founder of HOAL, and within a short time, Jacob and his father were on a plane headed for Arizona.

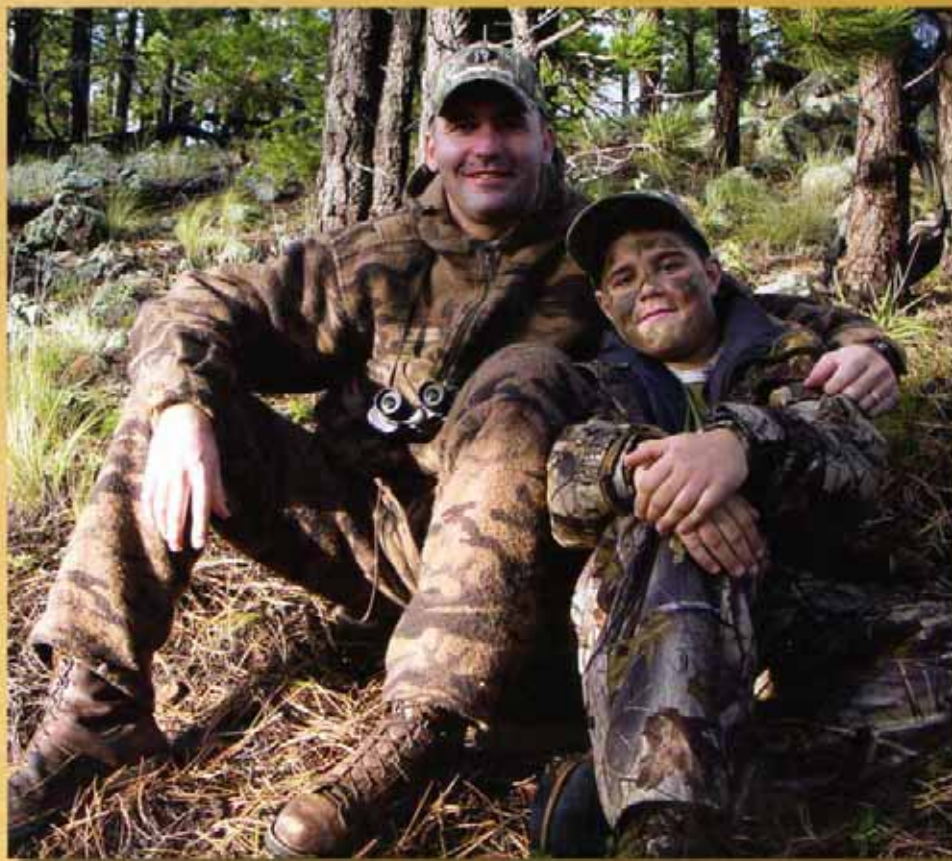
On the first day of Jacob's hunt, while he and I were sitting and eating breakfast at 3:00 in the morning, I asked him what type of bull he was looking for. “I want a 6x6 bull,” Jacob responded. A response I found filled with sincerity and determination. This was the 9th hunt I had filmed for HOAL and after seeing the gleam in Jacob's eyes, I knew this youngster had the self-assurance it would take to get the job done. After a quick cereal breakfast and some strategically placed camo face paint, Jacob was well on his way for the hunt, but little did we know that Mother Nature had other plans for us that day.

That morning, while walking along in the moonlight towards our destination deep into the woods, Jacob's guide, Lolo Hernandez from Amigo Outfitters located some fine bulls for Jacob. While we were hiking it rained, and as we approached a meadow with a bellowing bull in it, it was still raining and by the afternoon, as we chased that resourceful bull further into

the dark forest, it continued to rain. After getting drenched and being waterlogged all day, along with having our video camera shut down after spelling out the words, “Condensation Detected,” on the LCD screen, we decided to call it quits and try it again early the next day.

On the second morning we all had a new outlook on life. It's amazing what dry

clothes and dry boots will do for the soul. We began our search early the next morning and luckily came across a gigantic 360" sized bull. We were all sweating and holding our breath as Jacob positioned his muzzle loader barrel in the direction of the bull. As we held our breath, I heard an unfamiliar pop sound come from the rifle along with an unusual silence from the



Jacob and his dad Eric enjoy a typical fall morning in Arizona's elk country.



Photo by Stephanie Rainey

Jacob has already battled through two strokes caused by his illness, so a little wet gun powder was not going to stop him from harvesting his bull of a lifetime.

barrel. A hush arose from the four party audience as we watched the gigantic beast slowly walk away with his harem. Jacob whispered, "Did I get him?" "No," was the response from his guide, Lolo, "your rifle never fired buddy, the primer went off but the powder never ignited."

A few seconds later a shot rang out back in the woods while Lolo and Jacob's father tried feverishly to get the black-powder rifle to fire. The rain from the

previous day had not only dampened our clothes, but without our knowledge it had dampened the powder in Jacob's rifle. After a few desperate moments Lolo and Eric came running back with the newly reloaded rifle in hand and said, "Let's get going after that bull."

We hiked another mile or so, crossed a few fences, and before we knew it, Lolo had us back into the fold with the elk herd. We watched as two satellite bulls walked

around us, sniffing the air for any predators in the vicinity. Luckily for us, Lolo had gotten us right in front of the cow herd; a position any elk hunter would have given his eyeteeth for. We waited for what seemed like eternity and finally there was a bull. It was not the 360 bull, but another fine bull came out into the clearing. It made its presence known to us with the familiarity of a bugle, then following the scent from the herd of the cows, it walked within range. Jacob never hesitated. When Lolo said, "Shoot," Jacob shot. It was a direct hit at 50 yards. As the herd scattered, the bull stood its ground. It didn't go far with the bulls-eye hit. When the bull went down, Jacob was ecstatic with emotion and gave his father a high five and then some. We were all filled with emotion and I don't think there was a dry eye in the house.

After the bull was field-dressed and we began hauling the meat back to the truck, I asked Jacob what his favorite part of the hunt was. Jacob replied, "Seeing the views, the mountains and getting the elk." He also added that he wished his mother and younger brother could have come out to experience his adventure with him. When I asked him what advice he would give any other youngster who might have the opportunity to go on a HOAL hunt, he said, "I'd tell them to do it, cause it's great fun."

Jacob also explained to me that he knew exactly where the bull mount would go once he got it back. He said that after he received his mount, he would place it on the wall in the basement of his house. At that time I also asked Jacob what was going through his mind when he first saw his bull come out into the opening. Jacob stated, "I thought, I'm gonna shoot that thing." We both laughed and the final question I asked of Jacob was what he would say to all the people who made his hunt possible. Jacob smiled and replied, "I'd tell them thanks, thanks a lot for all that you did."

I think Jacob can rest assured that all the people who helped make his hunt possible are paid back each and every time they look at the photograph of him beside his bull. You can't help but smile

when you view the photo. It's a picture of one happy young man who achieved his goal of taking a 6x6 Arizona bull on what truly was his hunt of a lifetime.

Jacob's hunt was made possible through the HOAL organization along with the generosity of many kind and caring individuals. If you'd like to know more about the HOAL organization or if you'd like to make a child's wish come true, contact HOAL at www.huntofalifetime.org or call the founder of HOAL, Tina Pattison, at 1-866-345-4455. 🗨️

Editor's Note:

Stephanie Rainey is an outdoor freelance writer/photographer and host of an outdoor television program in Northern, Arizona called, "Stepping Outdoors." Her articles and photographs have appeared in Bow & Arrow hunting magazine, Big Game Adventures, Buckmasters, Outdoor Life, and Bugle magazine. She can be reached at backtotheforest@wmonline.com.



Photo by Stephanie Rainey

Jacob was successful because of his great team that included (from left to right) Lolo Hernandez of Amigo Outfitters, his dad Eric, and author/videographer Stephanie Rainey.

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