

Devon's Story

On January 10th, 1999, there was a blessing that was born into our family which consisted of Ery, myself, Kayla, Cory, and Dustin. He was very tiny weighing only 4lbs 15oz. With him being so small, we never knew that this would be the beginning of a life changing experience, and that he would touch so many lives around us.

Starting at one month old, Devon spent numerous nights at the hospital. After many blood tests and blood transfusions, it was discovered that he has a low immune system and is anaemic. A treatment was soon found which helped his red cells to stabilize. The whole experience was the start of a new journey for our entire family. We began to notice little things in Devon which worried us - Devon was not able to move physically like the other children his age. It was also difficult for him to sit up without assistance. We didn't know what was wrong but we knew something was. It was a long wait involving many different doctors and when Devon was two years old, we finally had an answer. He was diagnosed with Semilobar Holoprosencephaly, which simply put, means that the two lobes of his brain did not completely divide. The result is that Devon is very limited both physically and mentally and is dependent on family for his day to day care.

When he was diagnosed, the doctors predicted Devon's life expectancy to be the age of 3. It was at that moment when we made a promise to him that we would make his life the best it could be. He is now 10 years old and still very special to us. He has touched and been able to change the lives of many people in our community. He does not need words to make a huge impact on the people around him...he only need to flash his huge smile which is very contagious!

While growing up, Devon has always had a love for horses as thoroughly enjoyed watching the Stampede on T.V. When Devon was accepted into the wish program at Starlight, it came down to two choices - attending the Calgary Stampede or visiting Walt Disney World. By the reaction on his face when the Stampede was mentioned, we knew instantly that Calgary was the place he wanted to go. The organization of the whole trip was amazing due to the efforts of Starlight and all of the preparation they had put into it. We truly could not have been more blessed. After receiving "the wish package" prior to our trip, we almost thought that we had received enough as it included all sorts of gifts and surprises not only for Devon but for his brothers and sister as well! How wonderful that all the children were included and all felt "special".

Since the moment that we first stepped foot in Calgary, we were treated with the utmost respect by everyone around we encountered. There was never a dull or wasted moment on our trip. It was packed full of excitement and fun for the whole family! The day after we arrived, we started our trip by watching the opening parade. Later on that evening, we spent an exciting night watching the Chuck Wagon races, where we were shocked to find out that they wanted to interview Devon and put his story about Starlight granting his wish on the jumbo-tron. The announcer got the arena full of spectators to all say hello to Devon which they did in unison and it truly was a beautiful moment. We were later taken back to the barns to meet the drivers as well as their horses. This was one of the highlights of Devon's trip. We were also given the opportunity to attend the rodeo, midway attractions and super-dog show where we met some amazing people

who will remain life long friends to our family.

There were a few days that we were able to escape the hustle and bustle of the Stampede to truly enjoy the beauty of the Rocky Mountains. Our two day side trip was spectacular! The West Edmonton Mall was a must see attraction for us. There was a water park, amusement park, ice rink as well as many stores to see while we were there. Near the end of our trip, we were given tickets for front row seats to the Taylor Swift concert. It was an AWESOME show that we will never forget.

This was a trip that we will cherish forever and will remain in our hearts always. We are truly grateful for everything that Starlight has done for our family. They have made Devon's dream come true with so many extra highlights along the way. We could never have provided such an amazing trip without their help. We decided to show how much we appreciated the trip by inviting Steve (our wish granting volunteer) to spend a day with us on our farm. We wanted to show him a day in the life of Devon and it was an experience that our family will never forget. We know that Steve has taken away great memories as well! Thank you very much Steve and Connie.