



NEWS from the *Eagle's Nest* WINTER 2010

Eagle Mount Helena's 2nd Annual RUNNING AND SKIING OF THE LEPRECHAUNS

Come Join The FUN!!



Don't miss joining Eagle Mount Helena's Second Annual Running/Skiing of the Leprechauns! Registration includes a leprechaun hat and t-shirt. Friday night torchlight Skiing of the Leprechauns at Great Divide and Saturday 3K and 5K races and Mall Dash in Downtown Helena.

5K Timed Run – Starts at 11:00 a.m.

3K Fun Run/Walk – Starts at 11:00 a.m.

Dash To The End Of The Rainbow

(great for the kids) – Starts at noon

WHEN: Skiing - Friday, March 12, 2010
Run/Walk - Saturday, March 13, 2010

WHERE: Skiing - Great Divide Ski Hill
Run/Walk - Downtown Helena

TIMES: Skiing - 9:00 p.m.
Run/Walk - 11:00 a.m. (before the St. Patrick's Day Parade)

Preregistration: All Valley Bank locations.

Race Day Registration: Register at the Great Divide on Leprechaun Ski Night. Register Race Day at 9:00 a.m. at the starting point (Old Federal Building).

If unable to attend, please consider making a donation.



ZAC'S STORY

Being the parent of a special needs child is a special blessing in which God allows us to take part. So many times you want to close the door, stay home and tell everyone you are fine and you will take care of your child on your own. But there are so many opportunities out there that allow your child to experience life as never before — such as taking part in Eagle Mount and their programs. We have only been with the Helena group for a little over a year, but in that time my son, Zac, has had several life-enriching experiences that he would probably never have tried if it were not for EMH and all the volunteers that help the participants. As parents, we often have to do most of the work helping our child try to just keep up with the “normal” children their age. With the help of the EMH volunteers, we can sit back and watch our child enjoy the feeling of independence that comes with the classes in which they participate. I do not know if the EMH volunteers realize this — but it means a lot to this family.

Zac is eighteen years old and has loved riding horses since he was two. He was involved in another organization like EMH, and through that experience he was able to walk independently at the age of three and a half. He attended physical therapy weekly, but it was the horses that helped him the most. Being able to find that here in Helena was so exciting for him. He will quickly tell you he has his own saddle and that he can ride by himself. He is very safe and appropriately cautious with the horses. This last year he

walk him to the corral, brush him, clean his hooves, put on the bridle and, with some help, put his saddle and blanket on the horse. He uses the mounting stand to get on and off the horse, but after being led to the corral, he is ready to go.

Another experience Zac had last summer was learning to canoe. He has always loved being in a boat with his Grandpa Denny, but this was completely different — and he loved it. The weather did not cooperate with us this year, so he only went a couple of times, but he is looking forward to next canoe season.

Last but not least, this is the second year he has been snowboarding. Yes, I said snowboarding. For a person who at thirteen years of age had to undergo complete reconstruction on both legs to allow him to stand upright and not have both feet pointing inward to a snowboarder — wow! That is all I can say. We started out on skies, but because the surgery worked so well, he was unable to keep his feet pointed inward. After the second lesson, we put him on a snowboard and watched with amazement. He was a natural. Of course he had many falls, but he kept getting back up. He was doing so well that he went up the lift and snowboarded down. The last day, which was his sixth lesson, he went up the lift six times and snowboarded down all six times. I say this because he has gone up before and had to be rescued with the snowmobiles due to his extreme exhaustion, but this year he has done so well. And as of his last lesson, he was given the best deal in town and was able to buy his

own snowboard and boots. The first time he went out on his own board, he came down the hill with Jeff and





he did it all by himself. Jeff was so excited for Zac. After a break, he did the run two more times with only verbal assistance from the volunteer instructors. He is so looking forward to continuing this and will be able to now that he has his own equipment. The volunteers at the Great Divide were awesome. Zac connects with most people, but he worked with Jeff

this year and learned much from him.

We are so very proud of how much Zac keeps trying in every part of his life. When he was little and would fall down, we would tell him to get back up. He has tried just about everything you could imagine — he even wants to try bull riding. But mama won't let him. There have to be *some* limits!

UPCOMING CLASSES

DANCE

Allegro Dance - 3750 N. Montana Ave.
Open to all ages. Contact Beth at 443-1231.
Offers dance classes every Wednesday 3:45 - 4:45 p.m.

SWIMMING

St. Peters Hospital - Mon/Wed 4:45 - 5:45 p.m.

GOLF

I realize that there is still snow on the ground, but we will have that beautiful blue sky soon! Now is the time to pre-register for our new program. In collaboration with the Good Samaritan, all participants will receive their own set of golf clubs! Come join the fun.

SKIING SEASON RECAP

What a wonderful season of skiing we had! Great weather, excellent volunteers and huge smiles. When you see a smile of recognition, accomplishment, or even just a smile of camaraderie that passes between the volunteer and participant, you can't help but join in and share the moment.

Picture a true Montana day with blue skies, crisp air and snow on the ground. We have five participants, all bundled up with their skis on, eagerly heading out to the bunny hill. EMH volunteers and the Great Divide staff are ready to go. Two returning veterans hit the bunny slope and then they are ready to take on more difficult slopes. Zac (see his story on previous page) has progressed by leaps and bounds. A Great Divide instructor said, "I have seen so many kids have opportunities to ski, but I have never seen such dedication and perseverance in learning." Shikaylah loves Wednesdays so she can enjoy one of her favorite sports. One newbie participant loved the lift so much that his instructor said he had to take a crow bar to get him to release his grip — he wanted to stay on that fun ride! But man when he took off, it was like a bullet — and this was his first year!

Another newbie was fooling us — leaning into our arms on that first day — but he was tearing down the slope at the next lesson. We had to talk to him about waiting for his volunteer. Our youngest newbie was such a trooper. Her volunteer, Makaylah Darrow from Carroll College, had such patience with her. It was fun to see those smiles pass between them. She now skis part way down the bunny slope.

At the end of the ski day, they are a tired bunch, hungry for those snacks and some even catching a nap on the drive home. But always smiling!

A special thanks to Kevin, Nyla and their dedicated staff. Their instructors helped us again this year, always with the goal of creating fun for all. So, thanks Mark Hoyt and Jeff Linton from the Great Divide. You are wonderful, and you helped make all those smiles! To all the EMH volunteers, thanks again for your dedication — we appreciate you taking time to enhance the quality of life for our participants! Rick O'Connell, Debra, Cheryl Liedle, Makaylah Darrow, Mel Watson. Thanks Dorothy Johnson for our group picture. You are sweet as can be.

See all of you next year!



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EAGLE MOUNT HELENA
Coming Soon

Check out our website at

www.eaglemounthelena.org

for more information and

constant updates!

EAGLE MOUNT HELENA
Wish List

One Large Feeder

Saddle Blankets

Halter Ropes

Cover for Stirrups

Riding Helmets

Wheel Barrow or Cart

Senior Horse Feed