

## SCIF Pathfinder Committee Awards Elk Hunt for Terminally Ill Child

Jena Bartenhagen, a special young lady suffering from brain cancer, realized her dream of hunting elk when she became the recipient of the Jackie Bartels Memorial Youth Hunt. Jena wanted to hunt elk for a long time but couldn't because of debilitating hearing loss, physical instability, fatigue and severe pain caused by her illness. Jena had been scheduled to go on an elk hunt prior to this opportunity but, after recovering from one of her many surgeries, she learned that the hunt was no longer available. For Jena, the hope of hunting elk seemed to be impossible due in part to her need for medical treatment.

But, the impossible became possible through a chance encounter with Brigid O'Donoghue, founder of United Special Sportsmen Alliance, Inc., while Jena was in the hospital. Brigid fell in love with Jena and recommended her to Randall Bush, SCIF Humanitarian Committee Co-Chair, knowing the great work he and the Pathfinder program does to make disabled youth hunts possible. Thanks to the SCIF Pathfinder Committee, Jena's elk hunt of a lifetime came true when Rulon Jones, owner of Broadmouth Canyon Ranch donated a special elk hunt.

Rulon did not hesitate to offer a fair-chase, management elk hunt at his sprawling 30,000-acre ranch, which included country-style lodge accommodations and chef inspired meals. Rulon's friendly staff, Christie Creamer, who picked us up at the airport and long-time guides, Chuck Creamer and Keith Hill welcomed Jena and prepared her for the hunt by assisting with sighting in her scope and giving target practice tips. It didn't take long for Chuck and Keith to see that Jena was a serious shooter and did not plan to leave until she harvested an elk.

The morning of Jena's first day of hunting finally arrived, and she could hardly wait to get started. The hunt was scheduled mid-October just before the rutting period ended. Jena experienced the enthralling calls of bull elk bugling on maple and oak covered slopes where the fall season turned the landscape into a kaleidoscope of vibrant orange and yellow colors.

Traversing the massive canyon walls of Utah's pristine Wasatch Mountain Range, Jena kept a keen eye out for spots where elk would likely be. With a sharp sense of animal behavior, Jena asked to stop at what appeared to be a gathering spot of a large herd. She assessed the indicators: cotton wood trees meant there was water nearby and there was a large open area where the ground was marked by sparring bulls. This had to be a good spot.

And, indeed it was. Not long after arriving, cow elk poured into the area followed by a couple of world-class bulls. It was a sight she had dreamed of but, from her vantage point, was too far to take a shot. The herd moved on and the sun was close to setting, so it was time to go back to the lodge. Another delicious meal and more hunting stories ensued, only this time, Jena was able to chime in with her hunting experience.

Jena woke up the next morning determined that she would harvest an elk and, in fact, she did. It was just before sunset on the second day that Jena shot her prized elk. Brimming with excitement and a sense of accomplishment, Jena couldn't wait to tell everyone at dinner that night. Jena wants to thank everyone involved for this opportunity of a life time and hopes that the SCIF Pathfinder Committee continues to connect disabled and terminally ill youth with the great outdoors as this is an experience she will never forget.