

# Montana Hope Project



Sponsored by the Association of Montana Highway Patrolmen

November 2001

Volume 4, Issue 2

## United We Stand

By Leanne Smith, Editor

*September 11, 2001 is a day that will forever be etched in the minds and hearts of Americans. It is a day where we lost our innocence, even in Montana.*

*The lines between firefighters, police officers and those in military service were blurred. For the first time in recent history, Montana's Governor required personal security. The officers of the Montana Highway Patrol are performing that function. Many of Montana's highway patrol officers are also members of the Army National Guard, the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps Reserve. Many of the Hope Project's volunteers are members of the military or are military veterans. All those who work on behalf of, and receive benefit from, the Montana Hope Project pay tribute to those fellow police officers and firefighters who perished in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on our nation.*

*We also wish to pay tribute to those officers and volunteers who stand ready to serve our nation during this time of war.*

*These cowardly acts of terrorism have not torn this nation apart, but have served to unite us all. Freedom will prevail thanks to those in the service of their communities and country. We are stronger than terrorism.*

## Enduring Freedom

By Kelly Mantoath, Project President

Sir Walter Scott said, "The rose is fairest when it is budding new, and Hope is brightest when it dawns from fear." The morning of September 11, 2001 will be forever in our memories and history books.

We now watch and have hope as our servicemen and women do battle to protect our "Enduring Freedom."

The events of September 11 have shown us more than ever, how precious life is, and the importance of doing what we can to help those in need – including our own Montana children dealing with life-threatening illnesses.

(See page 2 *From The President's Desk*)

## Billings family stranded in DisneyWorld following attacks

By Becky Shay  
The Billings Gazette

Recipient Aimee Parker and her family were at Gatorland, at the request of Aimee's brother, 7-year-old Tyler, when the terrorist attacks occurred on Sept. 11. It wasn't until they had returned their rental car that the family learned they were

stranded in Florida. It was too late to get their car back, so Give Kids the World arranged a shuttle bus to bring them back to the facility and with support from Montana Hope Project provided a room for the family until they could fly back to Billings Sept. 16. We are pleased to report that the family returned to Montana safe

and sound.

When Lael Parker learned the Montana Hope Project could help fulfill a wish of her daughter, Aimee, she hesitated to seek the organization's help.

Aimee, then 3, had been treated for a cancerous tumor in her left eye.

(Continued on page 3 *Aimee Parker*)

# From the President's desk.....



**Anitra Schmid and Kelly Mantooth**

*Continued from front page*

This last summer was another busy, fun time for the Hope Project. In June we had a wonderful time at Izaak Walton Inn in Essex. To sum it all up: fun, fun, fun! The weather was decent as we were able to travel up to Logan Pass in Glacier National Park and then back to Minuteman Aviation for helicopter rides for the kids and their families. Thelma Bjorklund decided to have her own private helicopter ride from Essex to Kalispell. Thanks to the "ALERT" team and QRU for your help and quick response. Thelma is at home and doing very well. During one of the motorcycle rides a couple of riders and their passengers were treated to the sight of a "large" black bear running between the bikes. With the help of Alan Michael's car, MHP Colonel Obert had the opportunity to get up close and personal with an elk on the highway...well maybe too close. Elk do not bounce off cars as bugs do when you hit them! We had the joy of having a military honor guard for photos along with cami face painting and T-shirt painting. Thanks to Navy Commander Scott Reeves and Army National Guard Captain Tina Whittaker for joining us. Of course we all want photos of the RCMP in their bright red suits. No one would have imagined that such a tall Mountie could drive a Volkswagen bug! Felicia Sullivan made some blankets for the recipient kids and they were put to good use on the cold evenings. One little girl even commented that purple was her favorite color, and it so happened that Felicia had made a purple blanket and we were able to give that beautiful blanket to this recipient. Duane Irvin came

with his big semi tractor from Dick Irvin Inc., - those air horns are very loud. Saturday night, Big Daddy and the Blue Notes played into the evening. It was nice to sit and listen to the music and to look around the area and see people relaxing, some dancing to the music. Some folks even had the privilege of dancing with Miss Montana Kathy Henderson. Bob and Charlotte Marshall along with Dave and Lenora McEwen brought their horses along for those peaceful surrey rides in the forest. The Cut Bank fire department cooked up the Saturday night barbecue and the Cut Bank Penguins helped with serving and cleanup. Many thanks to all who donate time, money, goods and services to make these annual reunions a huge success!

Also in June was the Millenium car show in Helena. This was a fundraising event with the proceeds going to the Hope Project. If you missed this then you missed a time of music, fun and a great time of looking at cars from old to new. Shane Black, 17-year-old, from Butte, brought in over \$6,800.00 dollars in pledges!

July was the annual Ride for Hope ending at Chico Hot Springs. This year's event was one of the biggest yet and the weather was great, a little windy, but great! A limited-edition Montana Highway Patrol bear was auctioned off for \$400. The parade of motorcycles from Livingston to Chico was an awesome sight.

August was the golf tournament in Helena at Fox Ridge Golf Course. Governor Judy Martz started the tournament off for us and the weather was fantastic. The 2002 tournament will be held in conjunction with the annual Montana Highway Patrol Association's tournament. The Project's scramble will be held on Friday and the Association's tourney will be held Saturday and Sunday.

September was the Billings dinner and auction. Hundreds of items were donated from around the state for this event, which had a near capacity crowd. Plans are in the works for an auctioneer for next year's dinner. September also included the first annual Fun Run in Anaconda. Next year's run is already in the planning process.

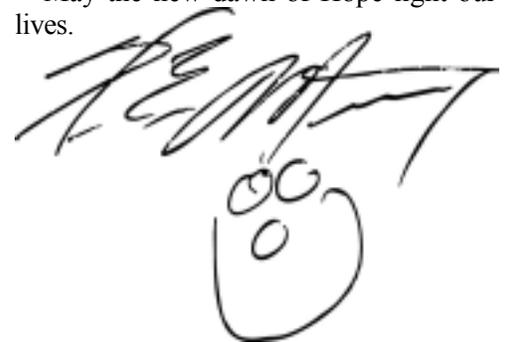
Many other fundraisers have gone on throughout the state which if I tried to

mention them I know I would leave somebody out. Thanks to all of you who organized and supported these events.

At the time of writing this letter, 12 wishes have been granted for the year 2001 with 10 others pending. There have been 168 total wishes granted since 1984. We already have travel plans for three families for next year, 2002, which are part of the "pending" wishes.

With your continued help and donations, the Hope Project can, in these uncertain times, continue to make certain that Montana Hope Project kids will continue to have their wishes granted.

May the new dawn of Hope light our lives.



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**Aimee Parker**.....from page 1

“She was doing so good,” Parker said. “I didn’t want to take advantage of Montana Hope.”

Then in January doctors found a new tumor on the retina in Aimee’s eye and Parker decided it was time to apply for Aimee’s wish to visit Disney World. In weeks, the Parker family had tickets to Florida.

Lael and Carl Parker, Aimee, and her brother Tyler made the trip to Florida this month, a welcome respite from trips to Salt Lake City where Aimee continues to be treated.

Going through what appears to be a downturn in Aimee’s health, Parker said she is especially grateful for the Montana Hope Project’s help. The family left Sept. 5 and were to return Sept. 11, but the trip was extended when air travel was stopped because of the terrorist attacks.

The Parkers had a great stay at Give Kids the World, a facility in Kissimmee, Fla., that provides everything from housing to ice cream parlors for families like Aimee’s. The facility gave Aimee a pin she wore that gave the Parkers easy access to all the sites, including access to the front of the line for rides at Disney World. Parker said Aimee, who recently turned



BOB ZELLAR/Billings Gazette staff

**Aimee Parker, her Mom, Lael, and brother, Tyler, at their home north of Billings.**

4, most enjoyed meeting and hugging the Disney characters.

“We would not have been able to see a fourth of everything we saw and did if we had to wait in line like everyone else,” Parker said. “We felt a little guilty about it, but both kids have been through a lot.”

“I cannot believe what the Montana Hope Project has done for us,” Parker

said. “As soon as we are back on our feet, that will be the biggest thing I support financially. I will in every other way anyway.”

The Montana Hope Project has also introduced the Parkers to others in similar situations.

“We’ve met a lot of families and saw a  
*(Continued on page 11 Aimee Parker)*

## Give the gift of HOPE

*Help make a wish come true for a critically ill Montana child. Make a donation to the Montana Hope Project in the name of a family member, friend or recipient.*

*A donation to the Montana Hope Project directly benefits Montana children.*

**HOPE - always the perfect gift**

This gift is made in: honor of \_\_\_\_\_  
memory

It is being given by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Your Name

Send confirmation card to: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**Complete and send to: The Montana Hope Project, P.O. Box 5927, Helena, MT 59604**

# *Flying high with the U.S. Navy Blue Angels team*



*Photos by Leanne Smith*

The U.S. Navy Blue Angels precision Flying team were in Bozeman this summer. They invited the recipients of the Montana Hope Project to attend a private air show. The children were treated to a thrilling display and had the opportunity to meet the pilots and crew. Special thanks to U.S. Navy Petty Officer Chaas Kunze of Bozeman for making the arrangements and giving our recipients an opportunity to meet the Blue Angels.

Top left. Recipient Bo Olson of Helena and Marine Corps recruiter Staff Sergeant Mark Leiding, Butte take a moment to chat on the tarmac.

Top right. Bozeman area Navy recruiters are shown with recipients (left to right) Matthew and Christopher Smith, East Helena; Bo Olson, Helena; PJ Dobbs, Butte; Dillon Kroll, Avon and James Skonberg, Helena. Also pictured is Montana Highway Patrolman Sergeant Robert Koch of Billings.

Lower left. Butte area recipient PJ Dobbs is pictured with Bozeman area members of the Montana Highway Patrol, Captain Kent Hickethier and Sergeant Dave Schenk. Bottom right. Recipients Jessie Tandy of Butte and Matthew and Christopher Smith of East Helena are pictured with a U.S. Navy Blue Angel pilot.



The Albertsons Community Partners Program continues to raise funds for the Montana Hope Project. Since the organization became a member of the program in 2000, more than \$2,500 has been donated to the Hope Project.

Albertsons donates three percent of each cardholder's sales

to the project when shoppers present their card at the checkout register.

Call Perry Brown at (406) 227-9287 or email him at [mtride@centric.net](mailto:mtride@centric.net) to request your free card today.



Photo by Leanne Smith

The Honor Guard is a special part of each reunion. This year's honor guard included (left to right) Commander Scott Reeves, Commanding Officer Naval Reserve Center, Helena; Montana Highway Patrolman Danny Sons, East Glacier; Constable Judy Devoe, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Cardston Detachment; Montana Highway patrol Honor Guard Mike Reddick, Great Falls; Constable Corette Penney, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Raymond Detachment; Captain Tina Whitaker, Assistant Personnel Officer 95<sup>th</sup> Troop Command, Montana Army National Guard, Helena and Constable Darren Anderson, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Sherwood Park Detachment.

## DisneyWorld most requested wish

Trips to DisneyWorld are by far the most requested wish granted to Montana Hope Project recipients. The project provides transportation and a generous check to be used during the trip. Give kids the World provides world-class accommodations for the entire family at very reduced rate.

Far left. Helena K-Mart employees raised funds this summer for Give Kids the World. Recipient James Skonberg (center) is shown here along with his parents Darrell and Cindy Stipcich .

Far right. Recipient Danny Mecca from Helena (right) poses with a pal at DisneyWorld.

Lower right. Billings recipient Kirby Conroy and her mother Patti Conroy take a rest from all the fun at DisneyWorld in front of the Magic Castle.



November is logo month at Sutey Oil/Thriftway



Montana Highway Patrolman Jeremy Lee, Columbus; Butte Area Coordinator Alice O'Donnell, Sutey Oil/Thriftway Comptroller Brian Bossard and Project President Kelly Mantooth accept a check from Sutey Oil/Thriftway for \$3,000. The money was raised by selling bear logos during April. Readers may purchase logos during November.



# Making wishes come true for Montana children

By Mack McConnell  
Rural Montana Magazine

Dave "Gunner" Bartz of Three Forks is not the kind of guy somebody would call a softy. He is a burly retired Marine Corps Captain who came up through the ranks and he didn't get his nickname from playing video games in the mall. But when he talks about the special children helped by the Montana Hope Project, his lips tend to quiver.

"Those kids really get to you," he says.

"Those kids" are the children with life-threatening illnesses whose wishes come true thanks to the people of the Hope Project.

The project began in 1984 when a handful of Montana Highway Patrol officers reached out to a couple of children with life-threatening illnesses. They dug into their own pockets, borrowed

a van and took the kids and their families on a trip to Glacier Park. Since then, the project has granted wishes to 168 Montana children. The wishes granted range from puppies to family trips to DisneyWorld to computers.

The project is sponsored by the Association of Montana Highway Patrolmen and has become known as "the bears that care." There are many others who help with the project. Gunner is one example.

A few years ago, Gunner participated in the annual Ride For Hope. The annual motorcycle ride is the project's largest fundraiser. Riders obtain pledges for each mile ridden. Gunner attended the 2001 Essex reunion as a reward for being one of the event's top pledge earners.

Since he became acquainted with the

project, it has become very important to him. "This is my way of giving back to the community," he said. "We were blessed with four healthy and bright kids. This is a way to help those not so fortunate. This is the only charity I participate in, so I figure I might as well do it right."

Gunner set a fund raising goal of \$1,000 for himself for last year's ride. He raised that much in three days, so he raised his goal to \$1,500. In the end, he raised about \$2,500. This year he raised \$2,685.

potential wish recipient family, he or she contacts the family and then forwards a recommendation to the project president. Families may also contact the highway patrol officers themselves or contact may be initiated by someone who is aware of the child's situation.

"The families are always very appreciative, sometimes to the point of being overwhelmed," said Coccoli. "And the children, they have endured so much. They have an almost angelic quality about them. If we all looked at the world through their eyes, we'd be better off. This may be perceived as giving a gift, but when you are a part of this you receive something you couldn't duplicate or purchase, or replace any other way."

Jefferson County Sheriff

Jim Quinlan has been helping with the project since 1993.

He said, "Any folks that need help should let us know. We'll assist them in

any way we can. We don't go looking for them, so potential recipients need to come forward. Friends can call for them too. I recommend they make contact with their local highway patrolman or patrol office.

For the past eight years, former patrolman Bob Marshall and his wife Charlotte have been bringing a special treat for the children each year—two large draft horses and a carriage.

"You get choked up...but it's rewarding to be able to do something for them and their families," Marshall said.

If you know of a child who may be eligible for a wish, please contact Kelly Mantooth at (406) 949-HOPE (4673) or (406) 538-4673.



The children of the Montana Hope Project at the 2001 Essex Reunion (above). Dave "Gunner" Bartz and recipient Roni Wambecke (center). Montana Highway Patrolman Bruce



"Once people know what the money is going for, they're really good about it," Gunner said.

Montana Highway Patrolman and Montana Army National Guard Captain Bruce Coccoli of Choteau also attended the reunion and brought along his Harley.

"We work a lot with the rough side of things," Coccoli said. "Working on a project like this helps rekindle one's faith in mankind."

Coccoli is a former area representative for the association and has been an intermediary between families and the project.

When a highway patrolman or other project volunteer becomes aware of a



Eight-year-old PJ Dobb (center) and his mother, Laurie, (far left) receive a check from Alice O'Donnell, Butte Area Coordinator and Montana Highway Patrolman Joseph Wyant and Captain Janet Baker.

## Butte boy Disneyworld bound

*From the Anaconda Leader*

Patrick "PJ" Dobb of Butte recently accepted a check for \$1,000 from the Montana Hope Project.

Dobb, who has a brain tumor, was granted his wish to go to Disneyworld by the Project. The check was for Dobb to use as spending money or however he wished to use it.

"The goal of the project remains to provide the Montana children we serve Hope and the success we all live for our dreams," said Alice O'Donnell, Butte area coordinator. "We, as adults, may never reach them but we have had time to try. Let their prayers be their Hope. Let Hope become reality."

P.J., and his parents visited Disneyworld in July.



Rhiannon Briggs, the project's 154th recipient, is shown above with Montana Highway Patrolman Richard Hader, Missoula Area Coordinator. Rhiannon's wish was a true community effort. Blackfoot Internet donated three years of internet service, Diana Netherton, the Pediatric Manager of the Community Medical Center, referred Rhiannon to the Project, Dan Rangitsch from Best Buy generously allowed the Project to purchase Rhiannon's computer and software at a discount and John Magee

from Bloom's furniture donated the desk and chair.

Hader is proud to be a part of the Montana Hope Project and the positive effect it has in communities across Montana. "The Patrol was practicing community policing before they had a word for it by placing us in these small communities. It shows the other side of law enforcement. They see us as a part of a family—an individual behind the badge."



# Car enthusiasts raise funds for Hope Project

By Duane Preshinger  
*Millennium Car Show Coordinator*

The Helena area car clubs (Helena Preservation Society) held their first annual Millennium Car Show and donated the proceeds to the Montana Hope Project, June 23. This year's event raised more than \$9,300 with over 120 cars participating from around the state. The car show was held in conjunction with the Mount Helena Music Festival.

The car show registration fee included a \$10 donation to the Montana Hope Project. All car show participants were encouraged to gather pledges toward the Montana Hope Project. As an added incentive to gather pledges, The Mount

Helena Music Festival donated two admission buttons to the festival and the \$10 Montana Hope Project registration donation was waived for all participants that collected over \$50 in pledges.

Special thanks to the Helena Preservation Society and for their hard work in organizing the car show, Jim McHugh from Downtown Helena for his donation of the admission buttons, Shane Black of Butte who raised over \$6,800 in pledges and all of the volunteers who helped raise money for the Hope Project.

Please mark your calendars and plan on attending next year's car show in downtown Helena during the Mount

Helena Music Festival on June 22, 2002. Please contact Duane Preshinger at (406) 443-7069 or by email at [preshingerfam@msn.com](mailto:preshingerfam@msn.com) for more information.



**Seventeen-year-old Shane Black of Anaconda raised \$6,800 in pledges for the Montana Hope Project at the Millenium Car Show in Helena. He was recently honored as the first inductee into the Millennium Show Hall of Fame.**

## *Black inducted into car show hall of fame*

*Story and photo by Carrie Mantooth*

A little girl talking about cancer and her trip to Disney World struck a chord with Shane Black last year, and the result was a \$6,800 donation to the Hope Project at the Millenium Car Show in Helena this June.

Shane had raised \$1,400 in pledges for the Hope Project at last year's car show and attended the banquet that followed. As the 9-year-old girl talked about her cancer treatment and the Hope Project's granting of her wish to visit Disney World, Shane was inspired. "I figured I wanted to do more to help the Hope Project because it's such a good cause," Shane said. "I decided to start fund-raising a little earlier this time, and sent about 20 letters to doctor's groups and credit unions asking for pledges."

Shane went door to door seeking pledges and held a raffle at the Picadelly Transportation Museum Car Rally in Butte. His hard work and persistence paid off big for the Hope Project when the Pioneer Street Rods Car Club in Butte contributed \$5,000 to the cause, putting him way over his goal. Shane plans to keep fund-raising for the Montana Hope Project.



*Photo by Leanne Smith*

**Montana's Governor Judy Martz kicked off the Hope Project Charity Golf Scramble at Fox Ridge Golf Course in Helena. Pictured with the Governor, left to right, are Christopher Smith, Matthew Smith, Brooke Darfler, Danny Mecca, M.H. Bear and James Skonberg. The event raised more than \$10,000 for the project. Next year's event is slated for August 16. Watch the website at [www.montanahope.org](http://www.montanahope.org) for more information and team registration forms.**



The Blue Knights, an international Law Enforcement Motorcycle Club, is now chartered and open for riding in Montana. Several members rode

in this year's Ride for Hope.

Any law enforcement riders, retired or active, including military, interested in joining the Blue Knights should contact the group's President Bruce Coccoli at (406) 466-2786 or e-mail him at [cocco@marsweb.com](mailto:cocco@marsweb.com). or Perry Brown at (406) 227-9287; [mtride@centric.net](mailto:mtride@centric.net).



Photo by Leanne Smith

## Riding For Hope 2001, Chico

The Ride for Hope 500 has grossed \$54,467 to date. This year's ride was dedicated to the memory of Frank Risley from Missoula. Frank lost his life while riding his Valkyrie in March. While he was involved in many motorcycle club activities, he was dedicated to the Montana Hope Project and was a fixture at both the Essex Reunion and Ride For Hope. His widow Carol, was a guest of honor at this year's event.

The annual ride is the organization's largest source of funding. This year saw a close contest for top fund-raising honors. Debbie Smith of Bozeman brought in top honors, followed by Larry Wolford of Polson and Wes Matson of Hamilton. Next year's event will be held July 27 and end in Kalispell. See [www.montanahope.org](http://www.montanahope.org) for more information.

# Billings benefit raises \$13,000 for HOPE

By Shawn Hazleton  
Billings Area Coordinator

Approximately 150 Hope Project supporters attended the Fourth Annual Billings Benefit Dinner and Silent Auction September 21 at the Perfect Place south of Billings in the Briarwood Subdivision. Magoo's of Billings catered the no-host cocktail hour and Dean Brown of Party Pig Catering prepared a delicious meal consisting of fresh fruit, teriyaki chicken, baron of beef, baked potato, pasta salad, and dessert.

The evening's special guests included Kate, Troy, and Nicole Renner; Laele, Carl, and Aimee Parker and Father John Houlihan of Saint Patrick's Cathedral.

The parents of the first Hope Project applicant, Mr. & Mrs. Dennis Kornychuck, also spoke before the captivated crowd.

Two silent auctions were held during the course of the evening. Each year the event features a vacation package. When the dust settled, Scott Hanser was the top bidder for two round trip tickets to Denver that included a two-night stay at the Courtyard by Marriot in downtown Denver and two tickets to the Denver Broncos vs. the New England Patriots NFL football game held October 28.

The evening was a wonderful success. The event attracted the largest crowd to date who had the opportunity to bid on

the largest selection of auction items. The event raised approximately \$13,000—enough to grant more than two wishes.

We would like to thank the following corporate sponsors of this year's event: Action Electric, Debtor Company, BFI/Billings Recycling, Denny Menholt Frontier Chevrolet, Hanser's Automotive and Wrecker Company, Mergenthaler Transfer, Perkins Restaurants, Precision Power Trains, Simkovic and Murray Law Firm, Transbas Inc., and the Law Firm of Edmiston and Shermerhorn. Special thanks to Colleen Mora of the Perfect Place and Dean Brown of Party Pig Catering. We look forward to seeing everyone next year.

## Butte area volunteers run for Hope

By Alice O'Donnell  
Butte Area Coordinator

The first "Run/Walk for Hope" was held Sept. 15 in Anaconda. Participants were given the option to run or walk the 2K or 4K event. Following the event, volunteers served lunch at the Washoe Park Pavilion. John "Doodge" Schalk, Jr., a past recipient, was the guest of honor.

The winner of the 2K event was Dan Boyle, second place went to Shawn and third place was taken by Trevor Olson. Jim Whelan was the first to cross the finish line during the 4K run, followed by

Janine Olson and Mark Blaskovich.

Thanks go out to the event's many donors, committee members and an enthusiastic group of runners and walkers. We are planning to hold the event in August 2002.

I am pleased to announce Sutey Oil/Thriftway Stores will be selling the logos during the month of November. If you live in or will be traveling through the Butte, Helena and Bozeman areas, please stop into a Sutey Oil or Thriftway location and purchase a logo. Proceeds will benefit the Hope Project.



Kleen King in Helena, Bozeman and Great Falls has donated more than \$2,000 through their semi-annual duct cleaning promotion. Project Vice-President Perry Brown appears in both the TV and radio spots. "The promotion has boosted the visibility of the project," said Brown. "We thank them for their continued support."

# Recipient receives private tour of nuclear submarine

By JO3 Kodi Sohl

Subase Bangor, PAO.

It takes six months to get a tour on a Trident submarine, providing all the paperwork is taken care of. Walk-ins are rare, but Bangor Tours department recently made an exception for a 12 year-old boy from Montana. His name is Dillon Kroll and he wants to be on a submarine someday.

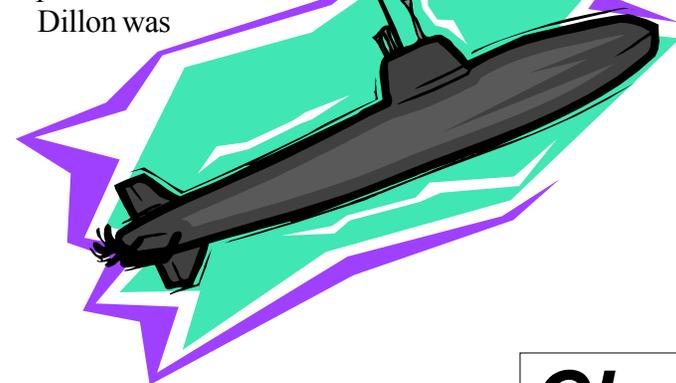
The Krolls have been making the long haul from Montana to Seattle for many years for medical visits for Dillon's Ependymoma, a type of brain cancer. This trip was more exciting than the average trip to the doctor's office because they got to tour USS Ohio (SSBN 726).

Their visit to Subase was set up by the Montana Hope Project, a program which was set up to give critically ill children the opportunity to have a special dream come true. When he was six years old the Hope Project fulfilled Dillon's wish by getting him a new computer.

The trip to Subase was arranged with extra efforts from Commander Scott Reeves, Commanding Officer of the Navy Reserve Center in Helena, the Hope Project and Bangor Tours.

Dillon and his family were attending a Blue Angels air show in Montana when they were offered the trip to Subase.

Dillon was



immedi-ately excited. "He couldn't sit still the whole way here," said his mother Audrey Kroll.

The whole family really enjoyed their experience on Subase.

"We loved it," said Martin Kroll, Dillon's father. "This is a once in a life-



Photo by JO3 Kodi Sohl, Subase Bangor, PAO

Dillon and Cheyenne Kroll take a lesson in submarine driving from MMCS (SS) Tom Tucker, USS Ohio (SSBN 726 ) Gold. Dillon wants to join the Navy some day.

time deal for us."

Dillon and his sister 11-year-old Cheyenne were mostly excited to get back to school and share their summer experience.

"It'll definitely be something I can tell my friends about!" said Dillon. "I liked all the explosive stuff. I always wondered what it would be like to see them."

While on board Ohio, Machinists Mate Senior

Chief Tom Tucker, Gold crew, showed Dillon everything from the torpedoes to the scrubbers, and Dillon awed at it all. "Now I know what I'm doing for my science project this year," he said. After Tucker explained the boat's buoyancy.

Dillon "revved up the gas pedal" as he sat behind the helm of the submarine.

"I'm going in the Navy," he said. "And I'm going to be on a submarine."

Readers may send a message of thanks and wishes of good will to the crew of the USS OHIO at the following address:

Commanding Officer  
USS OHIO (SSBN 726) (GOLD)  
FPO AP 96698-2093.

## Check out our website at:

[www.montanahope.org](http://www.montanahope.org)



# Polson's Super One Foods sports donation box

From the Lake County Leader

The Super One Foods in Polson has a simple box on the lobby area that will lead to dreams come true for some very special children.

The drop box was installed for the Montana Hope Project, a program sponsored by the Association of Montana Highway Patrolmen. It will collect donations for programs dedicated to give children with life-threatening illness the opportunity to have a special dream come true. Those dreams include camping trips, computers, satellite TV systems, stereos and even trips to DisneyWorld.

"It's the first of its kind in all 56 counties of Montana," Larry Wolford said.

Mercer Welding constructed the drop-box for the project, and John and Sue Fairchild, painted the box and put



*Aimee Parker.....from page 3*

lot of kids that have gone through stuff and that have benefited from Montana Hope," Parker said. "I want to cry every time I talk about it."

Aimee's cancer was found in April 2000, during a regular checkup by a pediatric ophthalmologist. Aimee wore glasses from the time she was about 6 months old, Parker said, because her eyes didn't move together. Tests in Billings and at the John A. Moran Eye Center in Salt Lake City confirmed Aimee had retinoblastoma, a rare cancer that occurs most often in children younger than 5. The cancer grows on the retina, the thin nerve tissue that lines the back of the eye, senses light and forms images, according to the National Cancer Institute.

The Parkers had two options for their daughter's treatment: They could have her eye removed, which would cure the cancer if it were contained, or they could go through chemotherapy and cryotherapy, which freezes the tumor. The latter could result in a higher chance that Aimee would contract an aggressive form of leukemia later in life, Lael Parker said.

the letters on it.

Donations made out to the Montana Hope Project may be dropped

off in the drop box or mailed to: Montana Hope Project, P.O. Box 5927, Helena, MT 59604.



**Ty Toth and his sister Shila learned to swim on their trip to DisneyWorld. "It meant a lot to Ty," his mother said. "He talks about his Disney Trip often and still asks if Tigger is real." Ty was granted wish number 157.**

"We agonized over it three days and decided to have the eye removed," she said.

Then an oncologist called and said the therapies would give Aimee a 95 percent chance of retaining her vision and that the chance of leukemia was only slightly higher than normal.

"We did a lot of praying, we just didn't know what to do," Parker said. "But that decided it. The doctors said that if it was their child, they would go with chemo."

During the next six months, Aimee went through six rounds of chemotherapy. The treatment was completed in October 2000.

The family continued to go to Salt Lake City for six-week checkups. A new tumor was found in January and was treated with cryotherapy. A checkup in February determined that the tumor was gone. Aimee was given clean bills of health in March and May. Then during a July check a new spot was found and "zapped," Parker said.

The family returned to Salt Lake City in late August and another spot was found. They returned Oct. 10 to determine what it is. Aimee had two spots treated. Her

medical team is still uncertain what the spots were. She'll return every 4-5 weeks to keep an eye on them.

"It is raised, not flat on the retina," Parker said. "It could be cancer, debris, scar tissue ... We just don't know and there's no way to tell except to watch it and pray that it doesn't grow. Some kids have it and it doesn't go away, but as long as it doesn't grow, it's OK."

Parker said her family is lucky in that Aimee's cancer was caught early enough to save her eye. Five years ago the only treatment was to remove the eye, she said.

Parker cautioned other parents to watch their children's eyes. Retinoblastoma is more common in children whose eyes don't move together, the condition Aimee was being treated for when the cancer was found, Parker said.

Another clue can be found in photographs, Parker said. When people in photos have "red eye" it is from the light reflecting off the retina. If people in the photo have red eye and the child doesn't "there's not a reflection and there's something there," Parker said.

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**“There’s nothing  
stronger than the  
heart of a volunteer.”**

Alec Baldwin as *Jimmy Doolittle*  
in the film “*Pearl Harbor*”.

Special thanks to all of the  
donors and volunteers  
who make this project  
possible. Happy Holidays.

## Hope Project Facts

90 cents of every dollar raised directly benefits Montana children.

The Montana Hope Project is NOT affiliated with any national organization.

The average cost of a wish is \$5,100.

The Montana Hope Project is funded entirely by your donations and local  
fund raising events.

The Montana Hope Project invites each recipient and their immediate family to  
an annual reunion held in Essex, on the edge of Glacier Park.

The Montana Hope Project has granted 168 wishes since 1984. The project granted 12  
wishes in 2001; 10 wishes are pending.

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