



CHAMPIONS ACROSS AMERICA

Presented by: Walmart 



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Meridian Boy is Idaho's 2009 Children's Miracle Network Champion Child

--Wal-Mart Sponsors Child's Trip to Disney World and Washington D.C --

BOISE — Jaden Carlsen, 5, of Meridian is this year's Children's Miracle Network Champion Child for Idaho.

As the 2009 Champion, Jaden and his family will receive an all-expense paid trip to Walt Disney World in Orlando, Fla., and to Washington D.C. to participate in activities with other Champion Children. He also received a \$500 gift card from Wal-Mart to help purchase items for the trip.

In his short life, Carlsen has endured hearing loss and dozens of medical problems. He was born at St. Luke's Children's Hospital not breathing and with no heartbeat after an emergency cesarean section.

Jaden was also born with a hole in his heart, missing ribs, scoliosis and a fused spine. At just five days old, Jaden was given his first surgery at St. Luke's – five more would follow.

Jaden suffers from duodenal atresia, a condition in which the first part of the small bowel does not develop properly during pregnancy causing disruptions in the stomach and digestive system.

“They said they didn't know if Jaden would ever be able to feed himself, walk or even talk,” said his mother Chris. “We count our blessings. We realize how lucky we are. We have a child who is walking and talking.”

Today, Jaden attends River Valley Elementary School in Meridian, and loves spending time outside playing with his sister Bailey. His favorite activities include riding his bicycle and scooter.

He has approached each challenge with an “I can get through this” attitude.

“With Jaden around you can never get down,” said his father Wade. “He’s so happy, even on his bad days, that it’s infectious.”

Each year the Children's Miracle Network chooses a child from each state who has triumphed despite severe medical challenges to participate in the Champions Across America program presented by Wal-Mart and Sam's Club.

The program not only honors the child, but helps raise awareness to the important work being done at children's hospitals. St. Luke's Children's Hospital is the only Children's Miracle Network affiliated hospital in Idaho.

Jaden and his family leave Boise on March 18 and will spend four days in Walt Disney World meeting other state Champions and participating in activities including meeting Disney celebrities and attending a performance by country artist and *Dancing with the Stars* professional Julianne Hough.

On the afternoon of March 22, the family flies to Washington D.C. where they'll spend three days touring the capital, attending a luncheon at the U.S. Capitol and a planned event at the White House.

Since 1987, Children’s Miracle Network and Wal-Mart have worked together to help children by raising money for children’s hospitals. Wal-Mart and Sam’s Club associates, customers and members have raised and contributed more than \$460 million for children’s hospitals.

“Over the past two decades, Children’s Miracle Network, its hospitals and especially the children treated have found a very special place in the hearts of Wal-Mart and Sam’s Club associates,” said Margaret McKenna, president of the Wal-Mart Foundation. “Our support for Champions Across America builds on the emotional connection our associates have with the children cared for by these hospitals.”

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About Children’s Miracle Network

Children's Miracle Network is a non-profit organization dedicated to saving and improving the lives of children by raising funds for children's hospitals. Each year, the 170 Children's Miracle Network hospitals provide the finest medical care, life-saving research and preventative education to help millions of kids overcome diseases and injuries of every kind. To learn more go to www.childrensmiraclenetwork.org.

About Philanthropy at Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.

Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. (NYSE: WMT) and the Wal-Mart Foundation are proud to support the charitable causes that are important to customers and associates in their own neighborhoods. Through its philanthropic programs and partnerships, the Wal-Mart Foundation supports initiatives focused on creating opportunities in education, workforce development, environmental sustainability, and health and wellness. In 2007, Wal-Mart, Sam’s Club and the Wal-Mart Foundation gave \$296 million to communities across the United States. To learn more, visit www.walmartfoundation.org.

About St. Luke’s Children’s Hospital

St. Luke’s Children’s Hospital, the only children’s hospital in Idaho, treats more than 50,000 children every year, including 28,000 who visit its Pediatric Emergency Department. St. Luke’s Children’s Hospital provides expert care to critically and chronically ill infants and children. These patients are routinely

referred to St. Luke's Children's Hospital from a multistate region for a variety of services including heart surgery, cancer treatment, orthopedics, neurological disorders, newborn intensive care, and rare infectious diseases. For more information visit www.stlukesonline.com.