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### FEATURE STORIES

## Benefit 4 Kids

By [Steve Pray](#)

**The Roots of a Maple Spread...** I was just sitting here in my deer stand remembering the first time I took Amy hunting with me. She was only four years old, but already she loved being outdoors and being with Dad. I could hardly go squirrel or rabbit hunting and not have Amy with me. Amy would sit for hours and watch her Mom and I shoot our bows and anytime I would shoot the guns you could bet your best bird dog that she would be right there with me. Her first real hunting trip was at the age of six and she was instantly in love. She sat with her Mom her first evening hunt and sat as still and quiet as a church mouse.

**Over the next few years** Amy became very proficient with a bow and took her first deer at the age of twelve. Man that kid could shoot, double lunged it at twenty yards. I don't believe a dad could be any prouder than I was. Amy loves spending time with her Mom and I and would rather go hunting at her spot than go shopping with her friends. Her spot is very special to her, she and her Mom hunt the big maple at Will's together every chance they get.



Baby Amy with proud mom and pop.

photo by benefit4kids.org

**My thoughts move ahead** to opening day of bow season 1995 and everyone is seeing deer. Amy and her mom have seen 31 deer at the big maple in the morning but have passed on several waiting for the right shot. Like so many hunts before they are hunting their special tree together. " Four eyes are better than two " Amy always says. At age fourteen Amy can outshoot every guy in camp including Dad and loves to prove it. That evening the shot was right and Amy took her second deer with another perfect double lunged. Just one week later only a few miles away Amy's cousin Candise would follow in Amy's footsteps and get her first deer her very first year of hunting.

**Amy is very outgoing** and happy go lucky and although Candise is shy and quiet the exact opposite of Amy, they are drawn together by their love for the outdoors.

Candise, like Amy strives to be the best archer she can be. Candise shoots in

tournaments and 3D shoots across the state and is a pleasure to watch. Candise loves to shoot her bow and hunt with her dad Eric. Wherever you see Eric, you can be sure that Candise is close by. Amy and Candise both love animals but also understand that they must be hunted to manage them or Mother Nature will do it herself. They both understand that respect for the animal you are hunting is the most important part of hunting. They both know that you do not take a shot unless you are confident you can make a quick clean kill. They both understand that you owe that to the animal you are hunting. They are both the type of hunter any father would be proud of.

## Remembering Amy

**Now I think ahead to opening day 1996** and I am at the big maple at Will's with Amy's mom. I feel like I should be at my spot in the back of the property, but not today. As I look over at the plaque that Amy's Grandpa put up, I

remember why I am here and not Amy. You see in April of 1996 we lost Amy at age 15 and Candise and Eric at ages 14 and 34 in separate tragedies just one day apart. I know that Amy is in a better place now, but I cannot imagine her wanting to be anywhere else but at her tree. However, I do know that her and Candise are in good spots and are seeing deer because Eric is with them. God must have needed the herd thinned out because he took three of the best in April of 96.



Hunting memories of Amy still grow deep in the heart of her father.

photo by benefit4kids.com

**Amy's mom still hunts the big maple at Wills** and I am sure sometimes Amy is hunting there with her. I think about Amy all the time especially when hunting and I'm glad I had the time with her that I did. I only wish we had more time together but wouldn't trade what we had for anything. I guess the whole point of this is that if you have a son take him hunting, but don't sell your daughters short, they may just outshoot you. Take your wife hunting and she may become your best hunting buddy. But most of all do it now because we all think we have plenty of time to do it later. But sometimes, for some people, in the blink of an eye, tomorrow never comes.

**When Amy died on April 21, 1996** at the age of 15 it left a hole in our hearts that we know will never be filled, yet we know for her, we must go on. Amy was a happy-go-lucky kid with many talents given to her by God. She was a wonderful artist, had a beautiful voice, was an excellent archer and she had a special love for the outdoors. Yet we always felt her greatest talent and the one she used most often was her ability to make others smile and feel good about themselves. Amy was very active in music and in school she joined S.A.D.D. and was active in the D.A.R.E. program. Her first love though remained archery even after she discovered boys and all the other things that go with being a teenager. When Amy died we made a promise to do whatever we could to help other children become involved in the outdoors that Amy loved. So began Benefit4Kids.



Benefit4Kids.org is helping children obtain lifelong dreams and goals.

photo by

## A Most Worthy Mission

**Benefit4Kids was founded in 1998** with its primary mission to involve today's children in the outdoors and the many activities it offers them. Many of today's children are denied the opportunity to experience the outdoors because of costs, lack of available mentors and a limited amount of facilities offering an all around outdoor experience. Benefit4Kids works to

help these children experience the outdoors through several children's programs. Benefit4Kids also works closely with several children's camps designed to work with injured and ill children. Instructors at these camps are experienced in medical procedures necessary to work with these children. They are also experienced in archery, camping, outdoor cooking, hiking, nature and many other facets of outdoor activities. In working with these and several other children's camps Benefit4Kids will continue to assist many less fortunate children enjoy our great outdoors and help them to learn the morals and family values that are so often lacking today.

Our Benefit4Kids **Outdoor Wish program** has been designed to allow children with debilitating conditions or terminal illnesses an opportunity to experience the outdoors in a way they would not otherwise have the chance to do.

Benefit4Kids has set up an extensive network of outdoor resources who are able to accommodate these children with

special needs and who are able to offer a quality outdoor experience to them. Benefit4Kids feels that there is no reason a child should ever be denied their request for an outdoor experience.

**Recently we were able to send a young man** with a life threatening disease on a Buffalo hunt. Eleven year-old Mark Austin took a huge bull weighing in at around 2250 lbs. Mark's Mom Autumn said the hunt came at a time when Mark was emotionally drained from his many ongoing chemo treatments and has helped to once again put the spark back in her tough little guy. We are also working on a January hunt for fallow deer for several kids and a Steelhead fishing trip is in the works for this spring for a large group of kids.

**Imagine** if you would the spectacular radiance of dawn appearing above the tree line, the fresh morning sun radiating across the lake and the mournful cry of the loon echoing in the distance. These are but a few of nature's treasures out of the reach of many special children today. Our Wild Dawn program has been set up to help send specially challenged children to a variety of camps specifically designed to handle their special needs. These camps offer not only a chance for learning and experiencing the great outdoors, but help create a feeling of normalcy and camaraderie in an otherwise isolated time.

**We are currently working to set up our Outdoor Horizons mentor program** to offer a one on one learning experience for children interested in the outdoors. Many children do not have someone close to them who is able to spend the time with them to teach them how to hunt, fish, camp, etc. The Outdoor Horizons program will provide that for them. Our Benefit4Kids mentors will be drawn from a pool of registered and qualified volunteers from the child's own state and local outdoors clubs to allow for maximum time together. These mentors will work closely with the child along with their parent or guardian and will be held to the highest ethical and moral standards and will be subject to background checks. When possible Benefit4Kids will assist in acquiring necessary equipment for the child if needed.



"These camps offer not only a chance for learning and experiencing the great outdoors, but help create a feeling of normalcy and camaraderie in an otherwise isolated time."

photos by  
benefit4kids.org



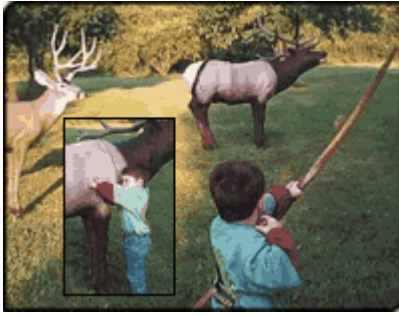
Helping children like Lane is a rewarding experience for volunteers at [benefit4kids.org](http://benefit4kids.org).

photo by [benefit4kids.org](http://benefit4kids.org)

**As Benefit4Kids grows** we will continue to add new programs and we will continually work together with national, state and local outdoor organizations in setting up special events throughout the country. These events will include archery and hunter safety clinics, special events to raise money to help less fortunate children, Hunters for the Hungry programs and many other benefit events. We will work with Corporate America as they lend us a hand and help us to help kids. Through their generous donations, our programs,

the many dedicated Benefit4Kids volunteers and the help of others who love the outdoors it is our hope to give children a better understanding of the outdoor world and to instill in them a love for the outdoors that will last them a lifetime. -

- **Steve Pray**



## Reaching Out To Help

Benefit4Kids is an IRS 501(c)(3) Tax exempt organization that was developed to involve children in the outdoors. Please visit the organization's website and you'll find out what they do and why they do it. Once there, you'll see pictures of some of its special kids and there is information about current B4K programs. Benefit4Kids was founded and is run by sportsmen and sports women who realize that our kids are our future. They are our leaders of tomorrow. Don't forget to check out our Benefit4Kids Coloring Book. It's fun and educational for both kids and adults. If you have any questions about Benefit4Kids please e-mail them from one of the many links on its website.

### Special Links To Visit



### Ways You Can Help

<http://www.benefit4kids.org/Helping.htm>

### The Outdoor Wish Program

[http://www.benefit4kids.org/Outdoor\\_Wish.htm](http://www.benefit4kids.org/Outdoor_Wish.htm)

Amy Pray Archery Shoot Info

### Shoot Schedule

[http://www.benefit4kids.org/Shoot\\_Schedule.htm](http://www.benefit4kids.org/Shoot_Schedule.htm)



### Target Sponsorships

<http://www.benefit4kids.org/Targets.htm>

### Visit Benefit4Kids Home Page

<http://www.benefit4kids.org>

### Send an email to B4K

[info@benefit4kids.org](mailto:info@benefit4kids.org)



# B♥K 4

BULL'S EYE! Youngsters get to enjoy many aspects of bowshooting at the Annual Amy Pray Benefit4Kids Archery Shoot.

photos by benefit4kids.org

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