

Illinois Federation makes a wish come true

By Andy Crawford
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The Make-A-Wish-Foundation and the Illinois BASS Federation helped make 17-year old Craig Carton's wish become a reality and presented him with a new fully equipped Ranger Boat. Craig Carton was almost born with a fishing pole in his hand.

"He carried a fishing pole with him everywhere he went," his mother, Ronda Kinzer, said, "If you washed the car, he fished out of the bucket."

So when the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Illinois told the 17-year-old cancer survivor from Canton, Ill., that he could have anything he wanted, Carton knew it had to be something to do with fishing.

Foundation officials offered him an all-expenses-paid fishing trip to Alaska, but that wasn't what he wanted.

"Craig doesn't like to travel," Kinzer told BASS Times. "They had him talked into it at one point, but then he said he didn't want to do that."

And then Carton, who beat non-Hodgkins lymphoma three years ago and is currently completing the first of three years of chemotherapy treatment for leukemia, saw something that made everything click.

"I saw a boat on a billboard," the soft-spoken youth said.

So he asked for a boat, but he wasn't looking for a big fiberglass rig. Instead, he asked for an aluminum Tracker that would simply allow him to get off the banks of his favorite lakes and follow the fish wherever they swam.

The Make-A-Wish Foundation normally doesn't grant wishes that include motors, but an exception was made.

Officials turned to an organization that has been helping make kids' dreams come true since 1990: the Illinois BASS Federation Chapter.

"They called and said, 'We know what you do, and if there's anybody who can help grant this wish, it's you,'" chapter spokesman Jim Nelson said.

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