



Kids' Community

Cancer Survivor Finds 4-H Community

(NAPSA)—Sometimes, at the darkest moment, there are smiling faces just around the next corner.

Jodi Poorman had always planned to have a memorable senior year, but what happened at her hometown Perry County (Ohio) Fair made it a time she will never forget, thanks to 4-H. Diagnosed with a very rare form of cancer, Ewing's Sarcoma, she thought everything was ruined. It was the 4-H family that gave her hope.

Stubborn and fighting to live a normal life, she made the decision to attend the annual fair that summer. Mostly everyone knew her from previous 4-H activities or from hearing her story so it was easier to face the stares at her baseball-cap-adorned head to hide her lack of hair and the facemask for keeping out dust and germs.

"It was a miserable week, one of the hottest I could remember at our fair, but I didn't complain because I just wanted my life to be as normal as possible. I had been raising my animals since before I was diagnosed, so I wasn't going to let this disease get in my way."

Weaker than she wanted to admit and risking her health by participating, she insisted, even amid concern from those around her. The potent chemotherapy drugs she was taking prior to the fair had caused her blood count to drop dangerously low and meant her body was unable to fight infections.

The week was an emotional roller coaster but Jodi proved her persistence. Even when her steer would not behave, she refused to quit. Somehow he finally obeyed as she fought to control him in the ring. As a huge surprise to all, she



After a cancer diagnosis, Jodi Poorman fought to keep her life "as normal as possible."

was awarded Grand Champion Steer, her first award ever. There was not a person who deserved it more.

Soon after Jodi's success in the ring, other 4-Hers who had heard of the young woman's plight donated their earnings from selling their animals to her medical fund.

"I had no idea I had so many friends," Jodi graciously expresses about the amazing support of the community and her 4-H friends in particular who helped her through the hardest parts of being sick.

Jodi recently celebrated five years of being cancer free and credits the community of 4-H with always being there.

To learn more about 4-H youth development clubs and programs, visit 4HUSA.ORG (www.4husa.org). You may find your own community of friends in the 4-H adventure.