

Jordan, 12
I wish to go to Australia
Brain tumor
Make-A-Wish Foundation of Colorado

When 12-year-old Jordan's wish to visit Australia came true, his trip spanned the equator and the International Date Line.

But that was the shortest part of a journey that started with hitting his head on June 1, 2009. While being checked out as a precaution, doctors found a tumor in Jordan's brain.

The news shocked his mother, Marcia. He had no other symptoms. He played soccer and competed in track. Their lives changed in a single afternoon. Surgeons removed the tumor, and Jordan spent the fall going through chemotherapy and radiation treatments.

"It was not a great year for me and my family," Jordan wrote in a letter to thank the Make-A-Wish Foundation®. He also wanted to share photos that would make other kids with life-threatening medical conditions "smile and look forward to their wish coming true, too!"

Jordan responded well to his treatments. But commuting to the hospital with his mother took them away from the rest of the family.

Doctor's Referral Starts Jordan's Trip of a Lifetime

Jordan's family received an unexpected call from the Make-A-Wish Foundation – his doctor had referred him for a wish. That's when Jordan indulged a long-held desire to visit Australia and see its exotic wildlife.

"Anything that moves – any animal or insect – is his favorite thing," Marcia says.

Suddenly, Jordan, his older sister and his parents had a chance to transform themselves back into a family, to forget about everything they endured after his diagnosis.

Jordan's trip was set to begin June 1, 2010 – exactly one year after he was diagnosed. Marcia says that she's sentimental about the date.

"A year earlier, things were a lot different for us," she says.

Family Time South of the Equator

His epic journey to the land Down Under started with a flight from Denver to Los Angeles and then on to Cairns. Jordan's wish granters used United Mileage Plus® frequent flier miles donated by Make-A-Wish® supporters to book flights for him and his family. They were also able to spend the night at the Hyatt Place before boarding their flight to Sydney. Hyatt Hotels & Resorts, a sponsor of the Foundation, has helped to grant hundred of wishes each year at properties across the globe.

Marcia says he really only expected to see Sydney. But thanks to the support of Monograms® Travel, a Foundation sponsor, a team of dedicated travel counselors worked

with Jordan's wish granters to astound him with an itinerary including Australia's most-popular destinations.

Jordan's photo album is now filled with images of his travels from the Opera House to the Outback, from the dusty Northern Territory to the dense rainforests of Queensland.

Jordan came to see wildlife, and he wasn't disappointed. He saw kangaroos, koalas and a huge saltwater crocodile. A visit to the Venom Zoo brought him face-to-face with all that slithers and crawls.

Jordan's Restored Smile Lifts Mom's Spirits

Each landmark the family visited put the stress of the past year further behind them. Jordan's smile was ever-present. And so was Marcia's as she watched Jordan live his fondest wish.

"It was so special for us," Marcia says. "We celebrated life as a family together."