

2009 Big Couple of the Year

Big Couple Ethan and Jessica Attkason and Little Brother Dakota

Jessica and Ethan Attkason have been selected as our very deserving Big Couple of the Year. Jessica and Ethan have been matched with Dakota for almost two years now. They were originally matched with each other for their mutual interest in history, world travel and computers. From their first meeting they realized that they had a lot in common and would have no trouble coming up with things to do together. Jessica and Ethan have been a very consistent and positive part of little brother's life over the last two years. They have been to Boise Hawks baseball games, Lift up America, hiked up Table Rock, tubing at Bogus, the Special Olympics games and volunteered at a soup kitchen, among many other activities that mom and Dakota agree that Dakota would not have gotten to do without his Big Couple.

The match gets together every other weekend, and mom often comments on how wonderful Jessica and Ethan are, as they always keep their plans unless they are sick or out of town and even then they make sure to let Dakota know that they will have to reschedule far in advance. The wide variety of activities and consistency from the Big Couple has been a driving force in raising Dakota's self esteem and confidence. Jessica and Ethan are very tuned into Dakota's needs and development into a young adult. They make an effort to talk to Dakota about friends and making good choices. This past semester Dakota made the honor roll at his school, and we are so proud of him for that wonderful accomplishment!! Mom feels that they have filled so many areas that were empty before and have been so good for little brother. "They are heaven sent."

This match has made a consistent effort to attend our agency match activities, anniversary parties and fundraisers, including Magical Moments. Jessica and Ethan shared one of their favorite stories of their time together...The three of us really enjoy hiking, and Dakota likes to go to new parks and trails. The first time we took him to Camel's Back Park, he loved exploring the new trails. He had just gotten new glasses, and was amazed at how clear everything was from the top of the hill. We joked with him that he was superman with his new glasses and super vision. After hiking around Camel's Back, we started to head back to the car. We took the trail on the back side of the park where there is a really sandy steep hill. Dakota enjoyed running up the hill, which took a lot of effort because it was so sandy. He started to run back down, but tripped over a rock. Luckily it was sandy and he didn't fall too hard...but his glasses went flying one way, and he went the other. I was afraid that he had broken his glasses, and potentially a bone! But, he jumped up, grabbed his glasses, and yelled "That was AWESOME! I want to do that again!" Now when we ask him where he wants to go hiking, he typically says "That park where I flew like superman...that's where I want to go!"