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**Time to shine**

**Sunshine Foundation sends recovering child, family from Berthoud on Disney vacation**

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By Sandy Barnes For the Reporter-Herald

A little more than a year ago, 9-year-old Aidan Roper of Berthoud suffered a life-threatening brain injury in an auto accident. After much medical treatment and therapy, Aidan is recovering and looking forward to a trip to Disney World, thanks to a gift from the **Sunshine Foundation**.

Hugging a large, stuffed Mickey Mouse he received as a pre-trip present, Aidan said he will probably "go for the rides" at Disney World after arriving at the vacation destination in early November.

"It's just really wonderful that we're going to be able to do that," said Aidan's mother, Kerry Roper. "When we got the call, we just cried."

After a stressful year since the accident and many negative responses to the family's requests for assistance with Aidan's mounting medical bills Roper said that the "yes" she got from the **Sunshine Foundation** was heartening to hear.

"I was shocked when I was granted this wish," she said.

While many of the foundation's beneficiaries come through referrals, Roper said that she learned of the opportunity through a cold call from the Make-A-Wish Foundation, which was seeking recipients for its program.

Fred Ohrn, Colorado Chapter president of the **Sunshine Foundation**, and his wife, Rita, presented the five-day vacation package to Aidan and his family at their home Monday afternoon.

The national charitable organization has a Dream Come True program that delivers Disney World packages to chronically ill and physically challenged children and their families.

"It decimates these families taking care of the kids," said Ohrn. "Sometimes it's the only time they got out." While in Florida, Aidan, his father, Laurs, 16-year-old brother, Liam, and mother and will stay at the **Sunshine Foundation's** Dream Village located near Disney World. The village features nine fairy tale-themed cottages, a handicap-accessible playground, heated swimming pool and miniature golf course.

The **Sunshine Foundation** selects children from referrals made by social workers, doctors, and the Make-a-Wish Foundation, which provides similar trips to terminally ill

children, said Sandra Carr, director of development for the organization. Funds to send children and their families on trips are raised through events such as a golf tournament in Loveland this past summer.

**Sunshine Foundation** volunteer Gene Butcher of Georgia also contributed funds for the Roper trip through his Hike for Dreams fundraiser.

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