



photos provided by the steele family  
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In front of the pink fire truck, Johnson takes a picture with members of the Pink Heals organization after signing the pink firetruck. The truck holds signatures from local cancer survivors.

Holding onto her new marine friend, second-grader Jaiden Johnson [2] smiles for the camera. Johnson traveled to Florida to swim with dolphins thanks to the help of the Make-A-Wish Foundation. we [pretended to] pull the fishing pole and then the dolphin made a sound like a reel," Johnson said. "Usually in the wild, dolphins only live to be about fifteen years, but some of these

# Diving into a Dream

Make-A-Wish Foundation sends second grader to Florida to swim with dolphins

As soon as she steps into the small room, her nerves take over. The room is full of cameras pointing her direction, but it is also full of familiar faces. Someone tells her that this is not a birthday party. No, this is a gathering to thank her for being an inspiration.

Her nervousness shifts to shock, and then to pure joy. She races around the room, hugging her friends, her relatives, and everyone else who is there to support her.

On November 10, **Jaidan Johnson** [2] was taken to Air U and told that the Make-A-Wish Foundation would be sending her to Florida's SeaWorld and Dolphin Cove, where she would swim with dolphins.

"It was cool, cause I was the only one who trick-rode and I was the youngest one there," Johnson said. "I was supposed to hold the fins. Both of them. But I slipped off, and then I was trick-riding!"

Johnson was diagnosed with Alpha 1 Antitrypsin, a condition related to the liver, at only 7 weeks old. She was added to the transplant list at nine months.

"Before her transplant, she couldn't walk because her belly was the size of a basketball due to ascites, which is fluid buildup," Johnson's mother Jaime Steele said. "To everyone's amazement, she walked for the first time one day after her

life-saving liver transplant."

After Johnson was told about her upcoming trip at Air U, she got to sign the Pink Heals pink fire truck outside of the building.

"The moment she realized that the whole group was there for her was wonderful. She just stood there and looked around in shock," event coordinator for Pink Heals **Tammy Denfeld** said. "She was very moved by signing the truck. She is a survivor."

Johnson left for Florida on November 12 with her mother and her grandparents, where she swam with dolphins at Dolphin Cove.

"There was a dolphin that pushed me by the foot. Two couldn't push me cause I was so tiny, and they were too close together," Johnson said. "Dixie was the one that pushed me. She was so fast. I loved it."

Jaidan's grandparents joined her and her mother for the trip to Florida. They went with Johnson to Dolphin Cove to share the experience with her.

"As I watched Johnson all I could think of was in that moment, she was experiencing pure joy," Johnson's grandmother Sandy Steele said. "It was the happiest I had ever seen her."

"I would have super strength so I could push bad guys into walls." **Bryce Williams** [1]

"I would be really fast so I could run to the store and buy a bunch of donuts." **Austin Fisher** [K]

"I would want to be able to be invisible whenever I wanted to. I would so mess with the students." **Nikki Seimears**

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state marching contest, senior pep rally, veterans day performance, jaiden johnson

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