

What it Means to be a Sunshine Child

By Jessica Loveday, Mooseheart Student

My name is Jessica Loveday. I am 17 years old, and am in the eleventh grade. I have been a student at Mooseheart School since sixth grade, in 2003. As a student at Mooseheart, I have had many opportunities that I would otherwise never have received. One of these opportunities is the chance to be a member of the Mooseheart Concert Band. I have always had a passion for music, so this means a great deal to me. Since joining the band in 2003, I have learned to play three instruments: the trombone, the tuba and the euphonium. Aside from the brilliant electives the school offers, there are numerous chances for students to use their social skills. I have often found myself socializing, through the course of the day, with a wide variety of people, from the very young elementary students, to the most intellectual of our teachers and staff. The ability to transition effortlessly from situation to situation has been invaluable, as I have gotten older. I treasure my ability to speak on a deeper level with those around me more than almost anything.

More important still is the ability to use this skill with the men and women who support Mooseheart. Following a conversation with lodge members, I leave knowing that even with the age difference and the different life experience, we parted with an understanding. I regularly have the chance to speak with the Moose members at the frequent Moose activities they have for us at Mooseheart, such as State Days. It's times like these, when I see and interact with the members, that it always makes what they do for us seem larger than life. These are ordinary men and women doing extraordinary things. Hearing their stories makes you understand just how much supporting the Moose means to them. They honestly do consider the children at Mooseheart to be their own.

Some of the most amazing Moose members I know are from my sunshine chapter. WOTM Chapter 3001 has the most inspiring women I have ever met. Jean Airey is an excellent example of this. Jean knows about my love of books and my desire to one day be an author. She has

repeatedly gone out of her way to give me advice on this, as she is also an author, and a member of an Authors' Guild. Jean has made it clear that if ever there is *anything* I need help with, be it simply a name for a character, or someone to edit my latest rough copy, she will do it in a heartbeat.

As a whole, the members of Mooseheart Chapter 3001 are the most generous women, and have great hearts. Just this past December they invited me to a meeting they had at the PJO Centre for Tomorrow. I spoke for a while, telling them how my school year was going, and what my favorite subjects were at the time. I was wondering to myself what we were going to do after I was done, because the meeting wasn't due to be over for well over two hours. It turned out that they had an activity; we made holiday cookie mixes for all of the elementary homes. Together we made ten bags, each with three cookie mixes, sprinkles, frosting and cookie cutters. Not only did I have a wonderful time with them, they made an extra bag for me to take home, for all of my "hard work." Before I left, a very busy, and very pregnant Mrs. Hart asked me if I would like her to drop off my bags at my house, since she couldn't take me in her car. Although I lost count of the exact number, I'm sure I declined at least ten times before I convinced her I would be o.k. to carry them. At the end of the meeting, I received hugs and goodbyes from everyone. I didn't get home until after 9 pm!

On the occasions that I happen to see the women of my sunshine chapter at activities on campus, such as basketball games, they always go out of their way to give me a hug and ask me how I'm doing. Because of the sincerity and obvious concern for my well-being, it would be hard living at Mooseheart without them. Since I have my sunshine chapter, I know that no matter how down of a day I'm having, or how bleak life is at the moment, there are always these loving women thinking about me; a thought that will always make me smile. More than words can tell, I appreciate these women and all that they do; without them, and all Moose members, there could be no Mooseheart. I truly love all of the women in my sunshine chapter, and wish them the very best. They are in my prayers and in my heart as well.

For Informational Purposes ONLY:

For additional information about sponsoring a Sunshine Child at Mooseheart, please contact Nancy Backmeyer at 630-906-3605.

For additional information about sponsoring a Sunshine Grandparent at Moosehaven, please contact Sandra Simmons at 904-278-1281.