



Priceless pictures

Images of three local children will flash in Times Square in honor of Down Syndrome Awareness Month



Courtesy Photos

McKenna Ziriak, 3, puts her arm around an almost 2-year-old Morgan. The picture, along with two others from local families, will be on display in New York City's Times Square for Down Syndrome Awareness Month.

BY MATT GLEASON / WORLD SCENE WRITER

Three cameras captured three moments in time: a sister hugging her little sis; a boy hollering "Yee-haw" atop a slow-moving horse; and a son welcoming his father home from a distant war zone.

Those pictures, which all include children who have Down syndrome, will be among more than 200 featured in the National Down Syndrome Society's video presentation, which will be shown Sunday morning on a Jumbotron in the heart of New York City's Times Square.

The 40-minute video heralds the beginning of National Down Syndrome Awareness Month, which includes a local Buddy Walk on Oct. 21 at Union High School.

To order a copy of the Times Square video when it is available, go online to www.tulsaworld.com/buddywalk.

For information about the local Buddy Walk, go online to www.tulsaworld.com/dsat.



Ben Ahumada rides a pony at last year's Buddy Walk.

These are the stories behind the three pictures that find children simply being children.

Morgan and McKenna Ziriak

Morgan Ziriak isn't one to sit still for long, so when her mother, Molly, sat the fun-loving toddler down with her big sister, McKenna, the elder Ziriak put her arm around her little sis in a loving embrace. It was also a means to hold the rambunctious child down long enough for Molly to snap a picture of the spring day her girls spent at Woodward Park.

McKenna's like that, her mother said of the 3-year-old. She's always the consummate big sister who looks after Morgan — McKenna calls her Morgie — and the youngest of the Ziriak brood, 8-month-old Malia.

Actually, when Morgan was born, Molly prayed McKenna would grow up to be a compassionate and patient big sister.

Prayer answered. As for Morgan, who'll be 2 years old in early October, her mother said she's got more love to give than Woodward Park has azaleas in the spring. "She will love anyone with no condition," Molly said, "which is what I wish we all had."

David and Jacob Young

David Young is a captain in the Army Reserve who spent much of 2006 in Afghanistan training members of the Afghan National Police.

Last November, an 18-hour flight finally brought the Tulsa police officer back home.

David's not one for grand fanfare, so when his plane landed, he only wanted a welcome party of one — his wife Cindy.

Then, once he arrived at a home far from the sands of Afghanistan, David walked through his front door to find his two children — one who barely knew him, Megan — she's 3 now — and his boy Jacob. Looking back on that day, David recalled how a pajama-clad Jacob sat in the living room gazing at his father for a time until David picked him up.

That's when the boy recognized his father as the man in camo.

"He had this shocked look on his face as if he was trying to figure it out," David recalled. "And he's looking at me and all the sudden he just smiles



David and Jacob Young, 7

real big and he just figures it out. He grabs a hold of me and just starts hugging my neck."

That's when Cindy snapped this picture.

That night, father and son did something they hadn't done in so long: they wrestled on the floor.

"We wrestled all the time before I left, and he didn't get a good dose of it while I was gone," David said. "He wanted some, so I let him get after it."

Again, David's not one for fanfare but he doesn't mind having his picture flashed on a huge screen in Times Square.

After all, he said, it's a tribute to a wonderful boy who loves his mama and is no pushover when it comes to wrestling.

The proud father said of his 7-year-old, "He is as strong as two boys his size, and I'm not being facetious."

Ben Ahumada

Ben Ahumada shies away from amusement park rides — he doesn't like the movement, his mother explained — but when it came time to hop on a slow-moving horse at last year's local Buddy Walk, Velvet Ahumada snapped this picture as her boy raised one hand and hollered "Yee-haw!"

That's Ben, a charismatic 8-year-old who loves animals, especially his pug dog Louie. He's the sort of child, his mother said, that people marvel at for his ability to brighten their day.

On the particular day that Ben rode the horse at the Buddy Walk, he must have brightened several days as he happily rode the horse at least three times and never wanted the ride to end.

In the time it took the horse to slowly clippity-clop around in a circle, the boy in eye glasses became a cowboy, or Ben would say, a "cow-ba-boy."

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A dream is a wish your heart makes

'Princess Wishes' unites Snow White, Cinderella, Ariel for a Disney greatest hits

BY MICHAEL SMITH
World Scene Writer

It makes no difference who you are, when you wish upon the many stars of the enchanted kingdom at this year's traditional Disney on Ice production.

This year's show is "Princess Wishes," and it allows children of all ages to help Snow White find her prince, watch Cinderella dance at the ball and experience a whole new world with Jasmine.

Sleeping Beauty, Mulan, Ariel and Belle round out the famous females hoping that their wishes come true in what resembles a Disney "greatest hits" package.

"It's like you're taking the best songs, the best moments and the best parts from other ice shows to make something special" with this princess all-stars production, said Robert Little, production designer.

"But this is definitely original. We never repeat ourselves on shows."

Little worked in Florida for 10 years with Kenneth Feld — the producer of Disney's ice shows as well as Barnum & Bailey circuses — and followed that during the last decade as associate professor of theater at Missouri State University in Springfield, specializing in scenic design.

But he still freelances occasionally on projects such as "Princess Wishes." When he goes back, he can pass along his skills as well as tell eccentric tales.

"Everyone has theater stories, but what happens backstage can be a lot different depending on the circumstances — like being charged by a rhino backstage at the circus," Little said, laughing from personal experience.

"It's the kind of thing I can tell the people working with me to design 'Little Women' (opening this fall at Springfield's Gillioz Theatre in the town square) that 'This probably won't happen to you.'"

In "Princess Wishes," the set design is critical for a show with

SEE ICE D-2



Feld Entertainment / Courtesy

Experience a whole new world with Jasmine and the rest of the Disney princesses in "Princess Wishes."

show
DISNEY ON ICE
"PRINCESS WISHES"

When:

7:30 p.m. Thursday; 10:30 a.m., 3:30 and 7:30 p.m. Friday; 11:30 a.m., 3:30 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday

Where:

Expo Square Pavilion at Tulsa State Fair, 19th Street and New Haven Avenue

Tickets:

\$20-\$30, admission to fair included in advance purchase tickets; call 376-6000 or (800) 511-1552, or online at www.tulsaworld.com/exposquare or www.tulsaworld.com/disneyonice