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Hard Work & Loads of Fun

BY MARK REARDON

This was my first year with the team, and I tell everyone this was the summer of my life!! And it was. I've known Doug Palmer, the clutch specialist for years. He urged me to join and do what I could. Well I got more than I gave while working hard and having a great time with a terrific group of people. Everyone on the team has their own gifts and talents, and when you put them all together you have one awesome team working hard to win, and having fun doing it.

A key aspect of working on this team is Jay's contagious attitude and happy energy. He makes sure everyone is having fun, and I truly enjoy this. Perhaps because I am a one of a kind myself joking and having fun is what I do best.

The greatest thing about this team is that it allowed my 14-year-old daughter Katie, the joy and a huge part of my life to participate. I was concerned at first that my weekends with Katie would be compromised while I participated in racing with Jay and the team, but Jay assured me that this was a family oriented sport and that Katie was welcome. Katie has had a blast with the other kids involved in the team, so much so that she had to make some hard decisions when it came time to celebrate her birthday. Stay home with mom or go to the track with dad. It took weeks for her to decide, but in the end she decided to spend her birthday with the rest of us at the races. I was amazed! I knew she liked racing, but didn't realize just how much. This is truly a tribute to how family friendly this group is.

It was great getting to know everyone on the team. Mixed with hard work was talk of everyday life, family, and anything we might need to discuss. It was such a great time and I have really enjoyed spending time with this great group of people.

Jay Blake Encourages Kids to Achieve Their Dreams

BY ARTHUR O'NEILL

Dreams are an important element in all of our lives. Dreams drive us, motivate us and energize us making life an exciting journey. When Jay Blake suffered a sudden loss of sight in the prime of his life, many would say that his dreams were gone. Maybe for most, but not for Jay. Jay has had an indomitable spirit throughout his life and after he learned to make the personal adjustment to living with blindness through rehabilitation training, Jay was back on track to follow his dreams. Of course his dreams were a bit different now that he had lost his vision. They were actually bigger than they were before.

Losing vision, in many ways, has given Jay a fresh perspective on how he could live his life. Jay's new dream was to use his former skills in auto-mechanics to become a race car mechanic. Told it was not possible, only made Jay work harder towards his dream.

Jay achieved his "impossible dream" by owning a racecar and becoming the chief mechanic of a car that now races successfully on the professional race circuit. His ability and achievement has earned him the respect of all who witness this master at work. His success as a race mechanic gives Jay much pride and enjoyment. And it has led him to another of his goals- to show and inspire others to follow their dreams.

In his experience as a blind person, Jay has met many others who unfortunately have not had the opportunity to be successful in their goals. Much of it has to do with the fact that others in society will

Jay shows blind students engine components.



often tell blind persons what they can't or shouldn't do. Jay has spoken to countless school groups, business organizations, and social clubs to help encourage others to reach for and achieve their dreams. Through his association with the Carroll Center he teaches blind persons, especially blind children, that it's not what you can't see but rather what you can do. It's this "can-do" attitude that has been Jay's mantra for success and one in which he feels can work for others.

For the past two years, Jay has shown his car to blind teenagers in summer training programs at the Carroll Center for the Blind. Recently Jay hosted the Carroll Center teens at his garage in Marstons Mills showing them the tools he uses, various parts of the car that need to be assembled and most of all, he starts the engine. The loud roar of the engine is proof of Jay's success as a mechanic, but the wide grin on his face demonstrates his success as a person who has followed his dream.

Jay's dream, his love and his expertise is in fine tuning his car for the next race. While Jay's mission is to share his dream with others, both sighted and blind, showing them how to reach for the sky and to follow their dreams.



ON-TRACK

Inspiring the Power of Positive Thinking and Self-Determination through Motor Sports

www.followadream.org

WINTER 2004

Follow A Dream Experiences National Media Blitz

Loring Barnes, principal of CLARITY Communications Group, an award-winning Massachusetts based public relations and marketing communications consultancy has been volunteering her valuable time and expertise getting Jay and the Follow A Dream organization national recognition. After several months of working with Don Aucoin at the Boston Globe to coordinate a meeting between he and Jay, Don spent an afternoon with Jay and the team while they tested the racecar in Epping, NH. A prominent feature article appeared in the Boston Globe on August 11. The epic of Jay and his real life "follow a dream" story was introduced with a full-width color photo over the above-the-fold lead story that spilled over to occupy all of the editorial space on page 5 of the Living Arts section. Don hit on all of the intended key message points,

including the Follow A Dream foundations need for an altruistic corporate backer. It was an uplifting story with a significant impact on those who read it.

Shortly after the Globe article ran, Jay began to hear from people who had seen the article and thought his unique story was worthy of a national audience. Producer John O'Rourke from NBC's Today Show and Bob Crowley of CNN's Boston Bureau were two of the people who wanted to work on getting Jay's story out there. After considerable preparation, crews from both NBC and CNN were scheduled to film Jay and the team both at the race track and at the shop in Marstons Mills, MA.

The Lucas Oil Nationals in Reading, PA in September was the locale for the NBC film crew and news correspondent Bob Dotson to meet Jay and the team and begin to film for what would be several days for a segment on the Today Shows, An American Story. Following a rain-out

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NBC Crew with Jay

LETTERS...

It was a sincere pleasure to have you and your race team at our 11th Annual Automotive Technician Competition. Perpetually throughout the day I heard positive comments regarding how you overcame a particularly difficult situation in your life and how you are an inspiration.

Words cannot express what Follow A Dream has done for me personally and to those you have spoken to about determination and the power of positive thinking. I am impressed with your genuine desire to encourage the youth of today with these ideals. The world could use more people like you with the character and charisma you exhibit.

I believe the entire mission of Follow A Dream was carried out at our event and I would recommend anyone to have you as a guest.

I look forward to the next time we can have you present.

Best Regards,
Doug Will
Competition Coordinator
Automobile Dealers Association Of Greater Philadelphia

On behalf of the entire Fessenden community, I would like to thank you for your most recent visit to our campus. Your motivational "toolbox for success"



Jay shows the Follow A Dream racecar to Fessenden students.

speech during Morning Meeting was an inspiration for faculty, staff and students. The Personal Growth and Development classes were especially excited to have you join them for an entertaining and informative question and answer session. Not everyone can bring a 250 m.p.h., 3000 Horsepower, methanol-fueled Funny Car in for "show and tell." As one student exclaimed, "Jay makes you feel like you can do anything." Our best wishes for a

safe and successful racing season. We look forward with great anticipation to your return visit.

Sincerely,
Jack Lyons
The Fessenden School

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Nuts 'n' Bolts with Jay

2004 has been a great year. Follow A Dream's mission to inspire the power of positive thinking and self-determination through the venue of NHRA drag racing has proven to be a powerful example that anything is possible with the right attitude. This year, once again, we have had the opportunity to work with many amazing individuals. We have brought the Follow A Dream message nationally through media such as NBC, CNN, and ESPN, as well as with individual presentations to students and business groups. The feedback we receive is very humbling and I am grateful that the message is reaching so many people, and making a difference in their lives.

Our goal for 2005 is to expand the Follow A Dream Community Outreach Program, expand our race schedule to include more televised events (increasing publicity), and reduce our operating deficit. However, running the program requires more than skill, fuel, and drive. I am asking each of you to help support Follow A Dream by becoming a club member. Your generous contributions play a critical part in helping us to reach our goals and to continue our mission. I would also like to ask each of you to bring the Follow A Dream Program to the attention of any potential corporate partners. Corporate support is a key element needed for our success. Ideal partners will benefit from our unique blend of motorsports and community outreach programs that increase national brand recognition while enhancing employees' moral, in an affordable package. Marketing materials are available, and they can be customized for individual needs.

In closing, I would like to thank everyone who helped Follow A Dream this past year by contributing their time, experience, financial support, and most of all your encouragement. I know that with your assistance 2005 will be our best year ever.

Have a safe and happy holiday season, and thank you for supporting Follow A Dream.

Jay Blake, President, Owner/Crew Chief
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Jay Blake and NBC's Bob Dotson sharing a laugh before settling down for one-on-one interview.

National Media Blitz continued

weekend in PA, Bob Dotson and the crew met Jay back in MA to film Jay for a couple of days, both at the shop and his home. A group of students and teachers from the Southeast Alternative Schools were invited to the shop to hear Jay promote his message of the power of positive thinking and self-determination. After spending considerable time and care to prepare for the shoot, the NBC crew spent the day filming Jay as he spoke to the students, worked on the racecar with his team, and sat down for a one-on-one interview with Bob Dotson. It was an exciting day for all involved and we were honored that NBC designated its "A-Team" for this assignment.

To the delight of family, friends, and some 25 million viewers Jay's story aired on An American Story with Bob Dotson on NBC's Today Show October 1.

We then hosted Bob Crowley of CNN at the shop where he set up his camera and sat down to talk with Jay about his impressive story, Follow A Dream's origins, and future goals. Bob then followed the team on their return trip to Reading, PA to complete the Lucas Oil Nationals postponed from September. No rain this time around. With Dave Ray in the seat of the Follow A Dream Funny Car, Follow A Dream saw its most successful weekend of the season and Bob got a remarkable introduction to NHRA drag racing. His interview with Jay ran on CNN's NewsNight with Aaron Brown on Friday, November 19. Bob put together a terrific piece and Jay has been receiving lots of positive feedback from those who saw the segment.

Follow A Dream has received lots of feedback from people all over the country who had the opportunity to see Jay profiled on one or both of the shows. Some facing challenges in their own lives, just looking to talk with someone who has an understanding of what they are going through, and others offering much needed support for Jay and his organization. We are currently working with several corporations who are interested in assisting Follow A Dream by developing a marketing partnership.

The recognition that Jay and the Follow A Dream mission gained by being featured on national television has been invaluable. The more people who hear about Jay and his story, the greater the possibilities that we will find that perfect fit in a marketing partner. We'll keep you posted!

Nick Heuchan

BY JIM BLAKE

When I was asked to write about the highlight of our past year the first thing that came to mind was Nick Heuchan. Nick is a friend of Jay's; he is 7 years old and has Juvenile Batten Disease. Two years ago Nick searched Jay out during our final trip of the year to Pennsylvania. Again this year Nick and his family twice came up from Maryland to see Jay and be with the team. Anyone who has experienced that special feeling of watching a child achieve something, should multiply it ten fold and that is what it is like to see Nick and Jay together. Batten's Disease attacks the brain and blindness is one aspect of this disease that will ultimately cause a breakdown of the central nervous system, and a much-abbreviated life. Currently

Nick only has limited peripheral vision, and like Jay he refuses to let it stop him. Nick receives tremendous support from his family and to see all of them with Jay, is amazing. My son Jamie and I traveled to a couple Junior Dragster races this fall in Maryland and New Jersey during an off weekend. While at one of the races Nick and his family saw our trailer with "Follow A Dream" on it. Well Nick searched us out and helped me to clean and service the carburetor on Jamie's car. Nick also took the time to call Jay and leave a message saying, "hi". Jamie and I drove home with great gratitude for what we have, and even greater admiration of what both Jay and Nick do for others. To learn more about Nick, please visit his website, www.nicksbatle.com.



One Impressive Young Man

Scotti DeWitt, part of the racing DeWitt family and one of our valued team members, grew up around the racetrack and started racing Junior Dragsters at the age of 9. Scotti raced junior dragsters for a number of years, winning many races and championships along the way. He has a genuine desire and possesses an instinctive ability to drive. Last winter, Scotti attended the Frank Hawley NHRA Drag Racing School in Gainesville, FL and received his license to drive Super Comp Dragsters. Scotti however put his racing aside to work



Scotti's dad, Scott, backing him up at the starting line.

with Jay. Jay was honored and decided to provide Scotti with his first competition ride in the Follow A Dream Super Comp Dragster. The first day out at the track testing, Scotti quickly proved to those watching he is a talented and capable driver. The next day, Scotti entered the car in competition and went all the way to the semi-finals. What a rewarding weekend for Scotti and those who know him. Scotti certainly deserves the opportunity to have some fun behind the wheel for all the time and energy he gives to the Follow A Dream program.

Race Season in Review

The Follow A Dream 2004 racing season has come to an end with Jay and the team looking forward to the 2005 season. Spring testing began with Jay's brother Jim in the drivers seat. As testing progressed the program became bogged down with rain, scheduling conflicts, and yes some mechanical gremlins. At that point time was against us. Jim approached Jay, and suggested a more experienced driver help us through this transition. Longtime friend Dave Ray who has been involved in racing since age 15, and competes in the International Hot Rod Association with his own Alcohol Funny car took time away from that schedule to work with Follow A Dream. WOW-what a great fit! Dave's driving abilities were apparent from the start and he and his wife Irene fit right in with the Follow A Dream family. Dave and Irene agreed to try a couple races while Tom Howell and Jay managed to find the gremlins and get them fixed.

Dave competed in three races, and every race was better than the last. By the time the Follow A Dream Team pulled into Reading, PA for the Lucas Oil Nationals in September, they once again were contenders to win the race. Accompanied by film crews from both the NBC Today Show and CNN, the team had their game faces on and prepared to impress. Again weather interfered and the National Event

Powerful Presentation for High School Senior

I never thought I'd be eating lunch with NBC Producer, John O'Rourke; nevermind he would have bought me my turkey sub. Early this September, I attended a taping for a segment of the Today Show, featuring one of the most amazing people I have ever met, Jay Blake.

I had heard all about Jay from my stepmom, who did all of his P.R. I knew he was blind with no sense of taste or smell. I had read newspaper articles and visited their website: www.followadream.org, to get more information on Jay. The night before the shoot, my stepmom and I spent the night at my grandparents on the Cape, so we could get to Jay's garage quicker in the morning.

I woke up early on the morning of September 21st, and my usual grumpy morning manners weren't present; I knew I had a fun day ahead of me. I arrived at the Follow A Dream headquarters and was introduced to someone I will never forget: Harry Jay Blake.

As the morning progressed, the NBC crew began to show up. The main reason for my attendance was to witness the production. I am planning on majoring in T.V. Production at college next year, and a chance like this doesn't come along too often. Around 11, students began to show up from the Southeast Alternative School. I don't really think any of them realized the impact Jay would have on their day—maybe even life. When they entered, Jay's flashy silver car caught their eyes and as he began to tell his story a hush fell over the audience as they listened in amazement.

Jays presentation is one of the most powerful I have ever listened

was postponed until the weekend of October 8th. Upon returning to Reading, the Follow A Dream Funny Car qualified fourth out of the twenty cars in their class. During eliminations Dave drove the car to the four quickest elapsed times in our history. In the semi-finals we drew nine-time world champion Frank Manzo. Well Frank managed to set a track record and run the second fastest run in history, to beat us in route to being the eventual winner. Losing may stink, but it was hard to be disappointed. As a team we had just run the fastest lap of our history, had been overwhelmed with people looking to meet with Jay, ESPN seemed to be on us at every move on the track, and NBC and CNN had shadowed us doing stories on how Jay has been able to motivate our team and so many others. Talk about a weekend!

Thus our second season with the Alcohol Funny Car comes to a close. The team will be spending time this winter working in the shop readying for next season. Dave and Irene have decided to become a permanent part of the team for next season, and Jay has a busy schedule booked which will take he and Lyle to schools and business groups throughout the country, delivering his powerful message on the power of positive thinking and self-determination. The season was a reflection of Jay. Faced with adversity and disappointment, we kept our thoughts and actions positive, and felt the rewards in the end.

Katelyn Edmonds sitting in the Follow A Dream Alcohol Funny Car



to. True to his motto, Jays positive attitude and self-determination shown through his past hardships. Since listening to Jay, I have tried to look at things more optimistically. I feel that just by knowing Jay and his story I have been able to overcome obstacles I have encountered.

Attending the taping was a once in a lifetime experience. The people I met there will forever be in my life because of the impact that they have made.

Katelyn Edmonds
Millis High School Senior