



# Jeffrey Hanson Art with a Heart

Story by Lesley Colvett

## **Jeffrey Hanson's Mission Statement:**

To create kinder communities, more compassionate nations, and a better world for all.

**A**rtist. Philanthropist. Student. Entrepreneur. Teenager. These are just a few of the hats Jeffrey Hanson of Overland Park wears each day. Not only is Jeffrey's artwork unique, but his story is even more unique.

Legally blind from an optic nerve tumor (which he nick-named "Clod") associated with a genetic condition called Neurofibromatosis, Jeffrey's loss of vision demanded radiation and

chemotherapy treatment in 2005-2006.

Jeff started painting abstract art note cards in the spring of 2006, when he was 12 years

old. It was a hobby and pastime for him, since his visual impairment prevented him from doing the usual "kid stuff," like skateboarding, bicycling, baseball, etc. Jeff's art is totally abstract, with bright, bold colors. His vision doesn't permit him to create any concrete images. But his color combinations are explosive!

Jeffrey is on a mission and wants

to raise thousands of dollars for local, national and international charities through his unique and beautiful artwork. Oh, and did I mention Jeffrey is almost 15 years old. "Happy 15th Jeffrey" on September 30!

As Jeffrey's mother Julie says it best, "Jeffrey is taking lemons and making flavorful lemonade." According to Julie, "Jeff's story is about generosity. Here is a teen who, rather than have a "pity party" about his medical condition, uses his time and talents for the benefit of

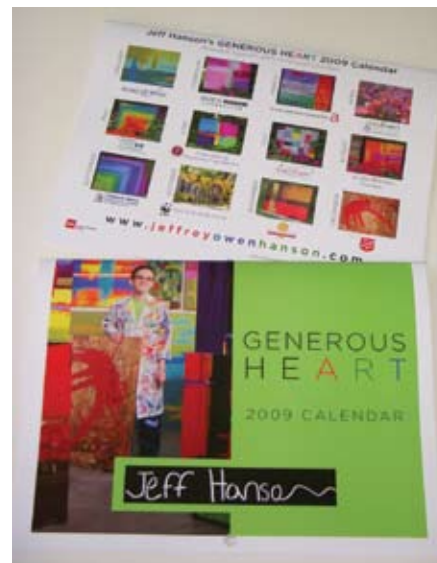
others." And that is exactly how Jeffrey's philanthropic mission all began. During the summer of 2006, Jeffrey and

Julie, who is known for her delicious cakes and breads, started a lemonade stand together called "Jeffrey's Bistro" on their driveway in Overland Park. Along with the lemonade and baked goods, Jeff sold his hand-painted note cards and ended up raising \$15,000 for the Children's Tumor Foundation.

The note cards grew to canvases, and the collection of artwork

make up the 2009 Generous HeArt Calendar that benefits 12 different local, national and international charities. The charities Jeffrey's calendar will benefit are: *Make-A-Wish Foundation, Medical Missions Foundation, Elton John AIDS Foundation, Children's Center for the Visually Impaired, Children's Tumor Foundation, International Myeloma Foundation, Angel Flight, KC Blind All-Stars Foundation, Children's Mercy Hospitals and Clinics, National Wildlife Federation, Harvesters and The Salvation Army.*

Jeffrey's come a long way since his lemonade stand "Jeffrey's Bistro." This December, Jeffrey will be the featured artist at DEAN & DELUCA in



**Jeffrey's 2009 Generous HeArt Calendar will benefit 12 charities**



**Jeffrey Hanson creates bold and vivid artwork, Sight for Sore Eyes**

Leawood, and his note cards, canvases, and 2009 Generous HeArt Calendar will all be for sale throughout the month.

This is just the beginning for Jeffrey. On October 13, 2007, Jeffrey was granted his wish through Make-A-Wish to meet Sir Elton John at the grand opening of the Sprint Center in Kansas City. During that meeting, Jeff handed the singer a \$1,000 check for the Elton John AIDS Foundation. Sharing the same passion for helping others and making a difference in the world, Sir Elton invited the Hanson family to his concert in Dubai that took place January 2008, and Sir Elton invited Jeff to paint twelve canvases to decorate the Elton John AIDS Foundation HIV/AIDS cluster homes in South Africa.

Jeffrey balances his busy life as a freshman at the Kansas State School for the Blind, an artist and a fundraiser for these charities close to his heart with such optimism and determination. "We all have a purpose in this world. Fortunately, Jeff discovered the joy found in the act of giving at such a young age. His hope is that he inspires others to find the joy in being generous, kind and compassionate," said his mother Julie.

Another title he can add to his resume is actor. Jeffrey will appear in a Harold Ramis's Biblical Era Comedy, *The Year One*, starring Jack Black, which is due out next summer.

*For more information on Jeffrey and his artwork, visit his website at [www.jeffreyowenhanson.com](http://www.jeffreyowenhanson.com).*



The Hanson family with Sir Elton John in Dubai