

Overland Park Teen Wins Kids Who Care Scholarship

Jeff Hanson, 15, Overland Park, is one of 10 national winners in the Kohl's Kids Who Care program. Jeff will receive a \$5,000 scholarship for post-secondary education. Kohl's selected Jeff because of his efforts to make his community a better place through volunteering.

Nearly 18,000 children were nominated for the scholarship, but Jeff stood out for his exceptional community service through volunteering, a release from the scholarship program said.

Kohl's Department Stores will also donate \$1,000 to a nonprofit organization of Jeff's choice. Jeff is gifting the Children's Tumor Foundation with the \$1,000.

Born with neurofibromatosis, a genetic disorder, Jeff developed a pea-sized tumor on his optic nerve. Treatment in 2006 stabilized his vision, but the condition left him legally blind and with learning disabilities. To fill his time and develop a hobby, Jeff picked up a paint brush and began creating brightly colored abstract note cards, which he sold at a weekly summer lemonade stand in 2006.

His family, which regularly donated money to the Children's Tumor Foundation, suggested that Jeff donate his proceeds to the foundation. His mother, Julie, added her home-baked goodies to what became "**Jeff's Bistro.**"

Word spread of Jeff's art and philanthropy. Neighbors and drivers regularly stopped by, purchasing art and pastries to go.

Jeff has moved from cards to canvas.

He now donates to 12 organizations including local, national and international foundations such as, Make-A-Wish Foundation, International Myeloma Foundation, and the Elton John AIDS Foundation.

He has sold more than 5,000 watercolor note cards and numerous canvas paintings and has donated more than \$100,000.

Elton John asked Jeff to provide paintings for an orphanage John sponsors in South Africa. Jeff created 12 canvases that now decorate the walls at Baphumelele Children's Home in Khayelitsha, South Africa.

The scholarship program is part of Kohl's Cares for Kids, Kohl's philanthropic program focused on improving the lives of children.