



Dreams Take Flight

by Emily Tye

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On May 8th, four campers from Camp Trailblazers Ontario - Morgan, Nick, Gage, and Alice, had the amazing opportunity of going to Disney World for one day with the Dreams Take Flight program - a national volunteer charitable organization dedicated to providing the trip of a lifetime to deserving



Nick enjoying the comforts of his first class seat!!

children. They were escorted by one of AboutFace's amazing volunteers, Louise who also organized the trip with all of the families on her free time. The long, but exciting day started at 4:30am when the children and their families were escorted by a Toronto Police motorcade to an Air Canada hangar at Pearson Airport in Toronto. The hangar was decorated and there were lots of interactive exhibits, animals, music playing and all of the children were provided with Dreams Take Flight t-shirts as well as waist packs, baseball hats and a backpack! The Dreams Take Flight group leader assigned to the AboutFace crew (Group 5) was Debi Bonneville, who was volunteering on her 17th flight and was an amazing leader right from the start.

At 6:15, the Air Canada flight took off for Orlando with a total of 180 kids and numerous volunteers. All of the Air Canada staff (who were also volunteering their time) were dressed up in Disney themed clothing and had decorated the airplane with colourful streamers and balloons. As this was the first flight of

their lives for many of the children, the volunteers tried to make it as fun as possible. After take off, a pillow fight broke out, there were toilet paper races and there were lots of movies to entertain them. Not your average flight to say the least!

Once they arrived at Disney World, the real excitement began. They walked down Main Street USA towards Cinderella's Castle where they took photos and watched the morning parade travelling through the streets. The first (and evidently favourite) ride the children went on was Space Mountain. They were treated like VIP's at all the rides and did not have to wait long in line, so they were able to go on Space Mountain and Splash Mountain twice! By the end of the day, Group 5 was able to experience 10 different rides, watch two Disney Shows and eat in two park restaurants. They were also each given some money on anything they wanted to in the gift shop! By the end of the day, everyone was showing signs of fatigue but they still had just enough energy to stay and watch the Electric Parade before heading back to the plane.



Nick, Alice, Louise, Morgan and Gage in the centre of town watching the electric parade.



Alice and Morgan enjoying the Tea Cup ride.

By the time the children got back on the plane to return home, they were definitely ready to sleep. Most of them were passed out by the time the plane took off! Once they landed in Toronto though, they were welcomed by yet another wonderful reception. As soon as they stepped of the plane, they were greeted by their cheering families who had been waiting patiently for their arrival at around 2:30am. Before they were sent on their way home, they were given a swag bag filled with Disney World goodies and even a pair of Crocs!

The Dreams Take Flight trip will no doubt be forever in the minds of the children who got to experience it as well as their parents. It was an opportunity that some of the children might not have otherwise had the opportunity to do. It was a chance to forget about the real world for a day

and just have as much fun as possible. Every volunteer with the Dreams Take Flight program and Air Canada was amazing, especially AboutFace's Team Leader Debi. There is no doubt that she made the whole experience that much more enjoyable for the children and everyone involved. Dreams Take Flight is an absolutely wonderful organization and we hope that we will continue to be involved with them for years to come!



Nick, Alice, Louise, Morgan and Gage and the rest of Group 5 outside of Cinderella's Castle.

"Thank you again for the opportunity that you have given us. We will NEVER forget this Magical Trip! We are very grateful that you chose Nick to go to Disney World - this trip has brought back the SMILE on his face again. Nick has to endure some surgeries soon and I am glad that he had a chance to step out of life for a day and enjoy being a kid."

- Kathie Barnes, Nick's mother

Please click [HERE](#) to see photos from the trip!!