

## "Good Times" for Sierra

by Christine Fuchs, 4/04/2008



When ten-year-old Sierra Wheaton Williams was presented with a signed photograph and CD, mouse pad, hat, bumper sticker and shirt by her favorite music star, Alan Jackson, she cried hysterically. She was so overwhelmed by the gifts from the country music singer but also extremely thankful to the man who made it all possible, Pioneer associate, Steven Forss.

Steven met Sierra through his friend Kristin Faulkner, Executive Director at Financial Planning Association™ of Massachusetts. When Steven found out Kristin's younger cousin, Sierra, had fought a cancerous brain tumor and is battling cerebral palsy, he knew he

wanted to help her. "I admired her determination to fight this battle while keeping a smile on her face," Steven said. "I wanted to make a difference in her life, so I asked Kristen what she likes. She told me, 'all she talks or thinks about is Alan Jackson!'"

After a few letters he sent to people in the music industry went unanswered, Steven persistently made phone calls to find out if he could get Sierra to meet Alan Jackson. First, he called Newbury Comics to find out what record label Alan is under. He then called Arista records in Nashville, TN and the Executive Vice President directed him to Alan's management company. The person there eventually got him in touch with the right people to make this dream come true for Sierra.

Todd Ramey at HK Management replied to Steven's request and provided him with all the Alan Jackson items that were presented to Sierra. Unfortunately, Alan Jackson doesn't have tour dates around the Northeast for a while, but Todd promises to get Sierra tickets and backstage passes for family and friends to meet Alan when he tours here later this summer.

Once Steven had everything together for Sierra, he set up a private party for her and family members at the Hard Rock Café. They were given VIP passes and the kids had a blast exploring the restaurant, acting like rock stars on stage (and driving around on Sierra's wheelchair), and spending the gift cards that Steven had given them at the Hard Rock store. When Steven presented her with the gifts from Alan Jackson, she was ecstatic and her parents were moved by the whole experience. "She was challenged at such a very young age," Steven said about Sierra. "My gift of putting a smile on her face for that day is immeasurable to me. It's all about how big her smile can be."

Sierra is a very strong and brave little girl who has already overcome so much in her life. What is even more amazing is the fact that, at age 10, she is the co-author of a book titled, *It doesn't look like a Monster: A Visit to Fenway*. The book is about going to Fenway Park with a disability while appreciating the differences that make us all unique.