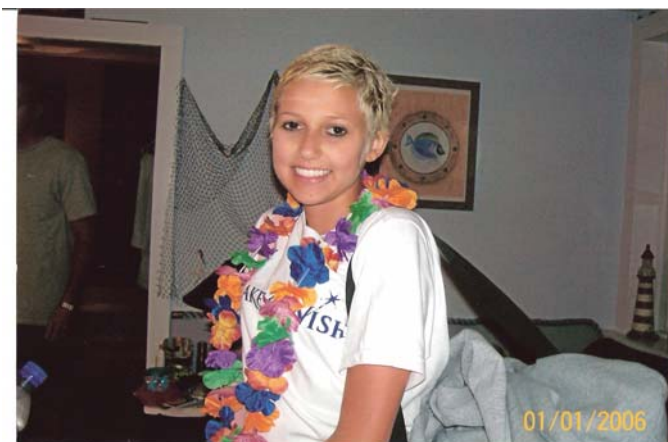


I WISH TO GO...

TO HAWAII!

EMILEE, 13



For most teenage girls, the chance to experience the exotic scenery and white sand beaches of Hawaii would be the opportunity of a lifetime. Such was the case for 13 year-old Emilee, a Pilot Mountain, NC teenager who loves spending time with friends, playing volleyball, and scrapbooking. Emilee's life was turned upside down when she learned she had Hodgkins disease. Upon Emilee's diagnosis, her doctor mentioned that he would recommend her to the Make-A-Wish foundation and advised her to begin thinking about her wish. Her mother, Amy Balthis, describes the joyous smile that formed upon hearing this: "You could just see the enthusiasm on her face, which I had not seen for so many months." Before long Emilee had decided on her wish; to go on a trip to Hawaii. She had learned about it in school and done a report on the exotic location. Emilee wanted to experience it first-hand! Being a volleyball player, she was also interested in all of the outdoor activities that Hawaii had to offer. She knew that the tropical trip would be incomplete without her best friend in the entire world, who she thinks of as a sister. When Emily lost her hair due to treatments, her best friend showed her support by cutting her hair to make a wig for Emilee. With the help of the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Central and Western Carolina, Emilee and her family were sent to the beautiful Hilton Hawaiian village in August of 2007.

Emilee's mother, Amy, described the family's week in Hawaii as amazing, fun, and stress-free. Emilee, her family and best friend were able to enjoy the beautiful scenery of Hawaii and indulge in various activities throughout the week. She got to swim with the dolphins, bask in the sun and enjoy all the water activities on the island. Her mother describes the main highlight of the trip being a helicopter ride over the island of Honolulu. The memories shared on Emilee's Hawaiian vacation will be ones that she and her family will cherish forever.

