



Make-A-Wish Foundation —James' Treehouse

Milton, Vermont

**The Make-A-Wish Foundation of Vermont
grants wishes to children who are living with a life-threatening illness,
to enrich the human experience with hope, strength, and joy.**

When James, then a 6th grader in Milton, Vermont, heard about a treehouse to which he could “climb” without walking, he broke into a huge smile. That smile spoke a thousand words. Unable to speak and confined to a wheelchair due to Pelizaeus-Merzbacher disease—a rare, genetic disorder of the central nervous system—James had his first treehouse experience when he visited Camp Ta-Kum-Ta in Colchester, Vermont. He responded so positively that his family approached the Vermont chapter of The Make-A-Wish Foundation about building James a treehouse of his very own. Make-A-Wish agreed enthusiastically, and, thanks to their sponsorship, committed volunteers from Forever Young Treehouses, and generous material donations from local businesses, James' wish of an arboreal get-away right in his backyard was granted.

Completed in the fall of 2002, James' treehouse is perched amidst an oak, maple, and beech tree on a steep bank, with one side lunging 22 feet above ground. James' father Paul describes the treehouse as something out of a Grimm's Fairytale. It is cozy, rustic, and playful. You would expect a gnome to live there. The walls tilt with the lean of the trees. The roof gently curves, and the exterior walls are rough, wavy, and knotty. Designer B'fer Roth positioned the windows so the visitor cannot see the ground, giving the visitor a sense of being high up in the trees. The treehouse, which is accessed by a 24-foot ramp and comfortably sleeps two, is now furnished with a wood stove, making the structure useable year-round. Paul says, “We like to go out to the treehouse and watch the snow and listen to opera. It is a magical retreat for the whole family.”



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