

Birthday Wish to Ride Sandy the Pony Comes True

James Davies celebrated his third birthday just the way he wanted – with a few extra surprises, thanks to one of our team members.

When Danielle Davies took the day off from work to celebrate her son, James', birthday, she was surprised that he turned down visits to the zoo, aquarium, park and ice cream parlor in favor of riding Sandy. After all, he rides our beloved penny-operated pony every time he accompanies his dad on a shopping trip.

But this time, James told his mom he wanted to ride Sandy for five rides.

"I was thinking, 'He'll get bored after 10 minutes,'" Danielle said. Instead, the birthday boy rode Sandy for two and a half hours straight. But every time a little boy or girl came by, he would get off and invite them to take a ride using one of his pennies.

What made the visit even more special is how team members went out of their way to make James' birthday something he'll never forget.

Before coming to the store, Danielle and James were at a restaurant having a pancake breakfast when they bumped into their neighbor, Christa Pettry, who is the Fresh Line Lead at our Lorain, Ohio store.

Christa wished James a happy birthday and asked him what his big plans were. When she heard about James' plans to ride Sandy after breakfast, she was intrigued and introduced herself as a member of management at the store.

"I expressed how excited I was to hear that," Christa said. "Mom went on to share that his only request was to go visit Sandy at Meijer and ride as long as he could."

After checking with Danielle to make sure she was good with the plan, Christa contacted Team Lead April Jackson at our Avon store's bakery to ask for her help in setting up a special surprise for James.

"James was so excited. He not only got a cake and balloon, but his face lit up for his cup of pennies that was provided to him. He had a blast, and his mom was so thankful and appreciative that Meijer went the extra mile for her son's simple request of spending his third birthday with Sandy," Christa said.

James' joy was contagious. He told everyone who walked by that he was celebrating his birthday by riding Sandy. Many wished him a happy birthday, and several dropped pennies into his cup so he could keep riding.

"This 3-year-old just had his best day ever," Danielle said. "It made my mama's heart so happy because he was over the moon. It just was such a good day."

Christa said Store Director Cassandra Robinson supports and encourages all team members to be involved in the community in a variety of ways.

"For me to do something so small as making a phone call to a peer so that I could buy a cake and a balloon for a little boy that only wanted to ride Sandy for his birthday was just another way of doing that," Christa said.

Additional assets available online: [Photos](#) ⁽¹⁾

<https://meijercommunity.com/Birthday-Wish-to-Ride-Sandy-the-Pony-Comes-True>