



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on July 2, 2021

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The Goodness of America

Community Rallies for Struggling Teen

A community in Lecanto, Florida, is rallying around 18-year-old Jeremy Schreifels, who suffers from debilitating Tourette's syndrome and is trying to raise \$130,000 for experimental Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS) surgery that is not covered by his health insurance.

Jeremy told the *Citrus County Chronicle*, "Every day is mostly a struggle for me, and I get rare bits of relief. The quality of life I'm living now is not sustainable."

The *Chronicle* reported that during the DBS surgery, doctors would implant a device that sends electrical signals to areas of the brain responsible for body movements. Similar to a pacemaker, the electrodes use pulses to regulate brain activity. In order to prepare for the surgery, Jeremy needs to undergo intensive outpatient psychiatric therapy called Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Tics (CBIT), which focuses on reducing anxiety prior to the surgery.

Jeremy is scheduled for an August 30 consultation with the DBS team to determine if he reduced his anxiety enough for the surgery to be effective.

Leon McClellan, vice president of M&B Dairy, became aware of Jeremy's story after reading about it in the *Citrus County Chronicle* and said he had an "overwhelming feeling" that he needed to help the young man.

McClellan reached out to some friends and fellow business owners, and they came up with a variety of ways to raise money for Jeremy's surgery, according to Breitbart News.

April Royal, president of Phil Royal Legacy Foundation, hosted both a car-wash fundraiser and an Italian dinner fund-raising event on May 22.

Cavallo Winery hosted a portrait event on June 5, where a minimum \$150 donation bought donors a 30-minute session with local photographer Curtiss Bryant.

Additionally, McClellan hosted a fundraising barbecue on June 12 to raise money for Jeremy's surgery. Patrons were invited to place orders for whole beef briskets, whole pork butts, or whole slabs of spare ribs at marked-up prices to cover the expense of the food and allow for enough funds to be donated to the surgery. The barbecue raised nearly \$27,000, according to the "Jeremy's Battle with Tourette's Syndrome" Facebook page.

Extreme Decalz graphic design shop owner Brian Sanders hosted an open house on June 19 for his business, which included vendor booths, a car and truck show, raffles, music, food, and kid-friendly activities. The event raised \$44,007, according to the *Citrus County Chronicle*. All proceeds went toward Jeremy's surgery.

Amber Howeth made homemade banana bread and sold it at Lollygagger's in Crystal River on June 13. She raised \$3,286, according to the *Citrus County Chronicle*. All donations went to Jeremy's surgery.

Stephen Quinn, who works for the Citrus County Sheriff's Office, learned of Jeremy's story on Facebook and was moved to act. He got together with a group of friends in June, and they hosted a barbecue at which they raised \$3,000 for Jeremy.



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“One guy said he’d cook and another said let’s use his house,” Quinn said. “We invited a bunch of friends, and friends of friends showed up and we had about 30 or 40 people.”

Donations poured in at the event, with a generous \$1,000 donation from a single anonymous donor.

“We know that the \$130,000 [goal] is for the surgery, but he’s probably going to need \$50,000 to \$60,000 more for after care or other therapies,” he said. “The community really has come together on this.”

An anonymous donor donated \$20,000 to Jeremy’s cause, bringing the total amount raised to \$249,000.

“Our family is very thankful and grateful for everyone that is helping our family; we would not be able to do it without the love and support of the community, family, and friends,” said Jeremy’s mother, Jennifer Schreifels.

Pregnant Mom Saves Three

Alyssa DeWitt of Manistee, Michigan, saved three kids from drowning at the First Street Beach Pier at Lake Michigan on June 8 despite being five months pregnant.

DeWitt recalled to WPNB/WGTU that she very nearly did not go to the beach that day because the weather was very windy, but ultimately decided to take her two young children, a six-year-old daughter and two-year-old son, and keep a close watch on them.

While there, she noticed three girls under the age of 15 going into the water and became concerned for their safety.

“I happened to look up and saw one of the girls waving her arms towards me and immediately knew something was wrong,” she said. “I got up, pulled my kids out of the water and ran out onto the pier.”

DeWitt called 911 but was unsure if they would arrive in time and knew she had to attempt to rescue the girls herself. With the help of her daughter, who kept her little brother from going back into the water or from inhibiting DeWitt’s efforts, Dewitt began attempting to pull the girls over the rocky and slippery pier. The rough waves and rip current made it very difficult.

“Every time I’d get one of them halfway up, a big wave would come smashing into us and knock them back down or almost pull me over,” she said.

DeWitt said her strength was renewed when one of the girls looked at her and said, “I’m going to die.” It was all DeWitt needed to hear to muster up every bit of strength she could to get the girls to safety.

“I was like, I’m not going to let you die, I’m going to get you out of this water, I promise,” DeWitt said.

Somehow, DeWitt managed to pull every single girl over the pier wall. Manistee police did not arrive until after all of the girls were pulled to safety.

“I am so thankful I was where I was at,” Dewitt said. “I don’t know if they would have gotten out alive if I had not seen them.”

DeWitt said she and the girls shared hugs and tears after the rescue.

Manistee Police Chief Josh Glass acknowledged DeWitt’s heroics. “Especially being a father of young children, it’s extremely impressive the way this young lady called to action without hesitation and I think it’s pretty obvious what would have happened if she wasn’t there,” he said.



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