

## GH's McKay enjoys hunt of a lifetime

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Each morning, as he gets ready to head off to work, Kelly McKay watches hunting shows on television.

And each morning, as soon as he leaves, his wife, Robin, changes the channel.

But one morning earlier this year, for whatever reason, Robin didn't switch the channel, and out of the corner of her eye, she noticed a commercial for the Tony Semple Foundation of Hope.



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Semple is a former player for the Detroit Lions, and foundation's mission is to "facilitate inspiring, meaningful outdoor experiences for youth who suffer life-challenging medical conditions."

Robin immediately thought of her 16-year-old son, Jordan, who suffers from cerebral palsy and is bound to a wheelchair.

"It all started when my dad left for work," said Jordan, a junior at Grand Haven High School. "My mom usually changes the hunting channel right when he leaves, but she didn't and she saw a commercial for the Tony Semple Foundation. She decided to call, and Tony called her back an hour later."

That conversation led to Jordan being invited to MUY Grande Ranch in Millersburg, between Alpena and Cheboygan, for a whitetail hunt last week.

McKay was one of five youngsters who attended the camp last week.

"There were two kids with cancer. One was younger than I was. He was like 12," McKay said. "We had another kid in a wheelchair, and one kid with only thumbs on his hands. They all amazed me. Having cancer, that would make me so depressed. I was just amazed how happy they were.

"The kids with only thumbs amazed me so much. He could play the guitar. I can't even play the guitar. It was inspiring."

McKay quickly became friends with the other kids at the camp, and also had the chance to meet former Detroit Lions Semple and Mark Spindler.

But the highlight of the trip was getting a chance to kill a trophy buck, and McKay did just that. After being outfitted with all the gear he would need, a special mount for his rifle was attached to his wheelchair.

"I've shot before, but not a lot," McKay said. "When I first got up there, they had me practice, and the first shot, I missed the target. Then we practiced another time and I did really good. It just proves that practice makes perfect."

The first night, Jordan and his father went out to look for deer without guns and saw several nice bucks, and many other whitetails up close.

"I had one doe come within 10 yards of me. There were a lot of deer," he said.

The second night, Jordan and his dad, along with a guide, went out to hunt, and before long, 10 bucks emerged from the woods. The guide was along to select the buck Jordan could shoot. The ranch was looking to harvest deer 3-4 years old that might score between 120 and 140, which is a very nice deer. These are bucks that the ranch wants to remove from the breeding stock.

"We had about 10 bucks come in about 7 p.m., and I got nervous as soon as I saw those 10 bucks," McKay said. "They all came in pretty much the same time. He shook his head at my dad that there was one (to shoot) out there. Then he told me and I started freaking out.

"I couldn't even aim the gun I was shaking so bad. It took me 10 times longer to shoot the deer. I was confident because I had practiced, and when I shot, the deer just dropped."

The entire hunt was recorded on video, and the McKays were told the footage will be shown on an ESPN outdoors show sometime next year.

Jordan comes from a family of hunters, but this was the first time he had participated in a successful hunt. The experience certainly changed him.

"This was my first animal I've shot, and it was really exciting, probably one of the most exciting moments of my life," he said.

"Seeing that deer, when I shot it, I couldn't even talk. It really changed the way I think about hunting. It was a lot different from where I hunt deer now. There were more deer. It was a lot more entertaining."

Now hooked on hunting, Jordan is now trying to kill another deer while hunting on his family's property near Custer. He realizes he's spoiled after all the deer he saw at Muy Grande Ranch.

"Most people will never get a deer that big in their life," he said.

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