

May 28, 2003

Dear Rob,

This letter has been a long time in getting to you, and for that I am sorry. Our family just wanted to say thank you.

For five years now the good people at the Gun Trader have had you out to Reno, NV to do demonstrations of your shooting skills and allowed us to try out the Springfield firearms. This has been a wonderful event that our family takes part in anytime you are here.

The first time you came to Reno you picked my seven year old son to time for you. John from the Gun Trader took pictures of this little kid in long baggy shorts following you around with the timer and posted them on the website, it was adorable. He just beamed every time someone mentioned it. Most years you picked him to time for you, and he always looked forward to it.

Last year, though, was different. On April 29th he was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes and his whole world was thrown into chaos. Everything changed. From the moment he was diagnosed, he was determined to take care of this thing and not let it get the best of him. I stayed with him in the hospital and would wake up to the sound of his voice telling the nurse, "I'll do it myself". Whether it was pricking his finger to test, or giving himself shots of insulin, he didn't want anyone else to have to take care of him.

His attitude was admirable, but there was a toll. From the time he was diagnosed he started having headaches that were later diagnosed as "stress headaches". These headaches were terrible in nature. If he didn't get medicated right away, he would be in so much pain he couldn't do anything but roll up in the fetal position and rest. Even though taking pain medication helped to reduce the severity of the headache, I hated the idea of him taking so much medication at so young an age. He was only 11 then. He was having headaches everyday, and there didn't seem to be an end in sight.

I would have done anything to help him, and we started to go to counseling, without much success.

I was very excited to be able to tell him that you were going to be here the end of June, but when I did, I got an unexpected response. He told me that you wouldn't remember him. I was shocked, but no matter what I said, or how logically I argued that you certainly would remember him, he stuck to his guns. It was as if he no longer had the capacity to hope for good things to happen to him.

By the time you got here, his pessimism had me worried, so I went down and talked to Frank at the Gun Trader. Without giving it away, I asked if you had a timer for your demonstrations. He seemed indignant and said, "Why Sam of course!" I breathed a hefty sigh of relief, and went home.

The next day we were late to the range, I knew I was in big trouble when EVERYONE turned around to watch us drive up the road. When we got stopped, you yelled at Sam, "where have you been, I've been having to time myself?" Sam put on the biggest smile and I realized that he hadn't smiled big in a very long time. The look on his face was priceless, I will keep it in my memory forever.

At the end of the night you gave him your hat and the next day we came into the Gun Trader and you signed it. That hat has a place of honor in his room, above all his other trophies. The only time it is taken down, is when he goes shooting, and then he never goes without it.

You gave Sam the courage to believe again. For that we will be eternally grateful.

A week later, we were up at Lake Tahoe relaxing in the sun. Sam was sitting next to me on the sand. It hit me suddenly, and I asked him, "Sam, when was the last time you had a headache?" We both thought about

it and he said it was about a week ago. This was phenomenal! He had never gone that long since he started having them. I laid back and thought, "what was going on a week ago?" Then it hit me, that was the day you did the demonstration, that was the last day he had a headache. We monitored his headaches closely after that, and after having a headache everyday, he only had four the entire month of July, and fewer in August.

I know you know you're a great shooter, but if anyone asks the Phelps family, we'll tell them... you're really a miracle worker.

Sam has had his trials to overcome since then, but he hasn't had to worry about chronic, ongoing headaches, or the side effects of taking too much pain medicine, since they have never come back.

Words cannot express how truly thankful we are for what you have done for Sam, this letter is only a weak attempt to do so.

We look forward to seeing you again in June!

Thank You so much,

The Phelps Family