

"For some reason, she saw archery on the list and said she wanted to try that," Pat said. "She's been immersed in it for the past few months."

During the summer months, Pat would drive M'aleigh to the National Field Archery Association Center and she would practice for afternoons at a time. Pat said M'aleigh looks forward to the day she can go hunting and hopes to use her skills to get a turkey for Thanksgiving dinner this year.

"Archery is M'aleigh's therapy," Pat said. "Every time she shoots an arrow she gets a little release. Since she started archery she's standing up a little straighter and holding her head up higher."

Pat explained that, when Misti's Huntington's disease began to progress rapidly and she was very sick, M'aleigh didn't want to leave her mom.

"She stayed out of her social circle. She didn't go to overnights at friends' houses or to birthday parties," Pat said. "She is a lot more grown up than friends her age because she's dealt with more than the average 11-year-old."

Since Misti's passing, Pat has pushed for M'aleigh to spend more time with other kids.

"She's been a little more outgoing and able to be with her friends a little more," Pat said.

M'aleigh has also gotten to spend more time with her dad, who lives in Riverton, Wyo.

"He's always wanted her to come and stay with him, but she would never accept an invitation when her mom was alive because she didn't want to leave Misti," Pat said. "She has gone and spent time with him since her mom has died. I think it's important for her to spend time with him, and I know it would make Misti happy."



M'aleigh poses with Ken Buhl, one of her archery instructors after she presented him with a traditional Native American star quilt.

Pat said she has been trying to stay busy with the disability advocacy work she started during Misti's lifetime and little projects she had put off.

"I promised Misti I would paint her home," Pat said. "When I was caring for Misti and my husband was sick with cancer, I just didn't have time. Now I seem to have too much time, so I've been painting and working on the rest of the house."

She has also become more connected to her spiritual side.

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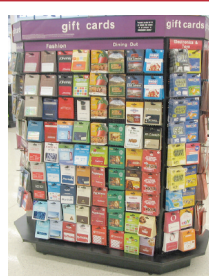
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