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Talk about a happy ending in St. Charles

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Column: Talk about frustrated.

You're a 10-year-old kid and you wake up one morning to discover your bike has been stolen from your backyard in St. Charles. Your parents, Kelly and Rob Whistler, don't have a lot of money to replace it. Dad hasn't been working because of the contractors strike; and Mom stays home because you and your three siblings are all battling rare medical problems, including 15-month-old Kayli, who underwent heart surgery recently and wasn't supposed to live to see her first birthday.

You, Jacob, have autism and a disease called eosinophilic esophagitis, which makes it really hard to swallow and can lead to cancer.

Talk about shocked (in a bad way).

Six weeks after your bike goes missing, a neighborhood kid brags about a BB gun he stole. When he drags you to his backyard to show it off, you see a bunch of bikes, including yours. You know it's yours: It's got the two different wheels you put on it. And all the same scratches. Even has the duct tape you wrapped around the seat.

Talk about angry.

You tell the kid to give back your bike and he says you can't prove it's yours. Later, your mom tries to talk to his mom. But when she goes into the backyard, all the bikes are gone, including yours, and his mom says you're making everything up. Your mom calls the police. But when the Kane County Sheriff's Department shows up, you are told that without a serial number, there's no way to prove the bike is yours.

So why is this kid getting away with everything, including your bicycle?

Talk about disappointed.

You were planning on riding that bike in the "Ride And Stride for Wishes" on Aug. 29, a fundraiser in Skokie to raise money for Make a Wish. The foundation has helped your family a whole lot. In fact, 4-year-old brother Nicholas, who has an inoperable brain tumor, is a poster child for the organization. And now you're going to have to borrow a bike. Or find one really quick and really cheap at a garage sale.

Talk about surprised (in a good way).

The day after Sgt. Branden Gentry talks to your mom, he shows up at your front door with Detective Steve Reitmeyer. They pull a brand-new Tony Hawks bike out of the back of the squad car and tell you it's yours. They also hand you a shiny bike lock and an official sheriff's lanyard.

Sgt. Gentry says the bike is a gift from the Kane County Sheriff's Fraternal Order of Police. He tells your mom his own 15-month old son has a rare chromosome disorder that affected his facial muscle, making him unable to smile.

Talk about sad.

Even though you were really mad at first, you get rid of your anger and replace it with sadness for the kid who stole your bike because he doesn't have anyone to teach him the difference between right and wrong. You know it's a lesson he needs to learn because as he gets bigger, so will his problems.

Talk about cool!

How neat is it to be riding around on a new bike that real-life detectives gave you. You also like that feeling of forgiveness you're carrying in your heart. Mom was right: Think positive. Pray. And everything will be OK.



After 10-year-old Jacob Whistler's bike was stolen, two Kane County Sheriff's officers, Sgt. Branden Gentry (left) and Detective Steve Reitmeyer bought Jacob a new bike with funds from their chapter of the Fraternal Order of Police.



Kane County Sheriff's Detective Steve Reitmeyer helps Jacob Whistler, 10, of St. Charles, with his new bike, purchased by the department with funds from its chapter of the Fraternal Order of Police, after the youth's bike was stolen.