

That's How It's "Dun" – The Groves Family Recognized for Their Service to Dunlap

Scott and Melissa Groves and their children are this quarter's recipients of DCDC's "That's How It's Dun" Award. This award is part of a community service recognition program created to honor those who go above and beyond in their volunteer service contributions to the Dunlap community.

Scott grew up in Carter Lake, IA and Melissa grew up in Aurora, NE, moving to Omaha in her early teen years. The two lived in Council Bluffs after they were married in 2002 and began growing their family through foster care adoption.

"Life was great," said Melissa, "that is, until I got sick and lost my right leg in 2015."

Melissa lost her leg in part by a clotting disorder she never knew she had, coupled with the disorder being misdiagnosed for too long and then sepsis/necrosis setting in after surgery. Adjusting to this "new normal" was challenging for the entire family.

"Our boys were growing quickly, testing limits, and the peer pressures of city life were beginning to take its toll on our teenagers," Melissa shared. "In short, we were looking for the safety and slower pace that smaller communities offer. We moved to Dunlap in the Fall of 2019, and honestly it felt like a Godsend...we were meant to be here."

Scott works full-time at Bomgaars in Denison and Melissa is a stay-at-home mom. The Groves have three adult children: Autumn (who also moved to Dunlap last year), Noah and Chase. They have an additional eight children who are school-aged or younger, beginning with Garrett who is 16. He is followed by Hayden, 15; Ashton, 14; Curran, 13; Bryer, 10; Zayn, 9; Parker, 7; and Bennett who turns 2 on October 29th.

"We are so fortunate to have the Groves family in our community," stated Jill Schaben, DCDC Executive Director. "I was excited to receive their nomination because every time I turn around, they are volunteering time for our community. It made me happy to know that others in town were recognizing this family's level of service."

The Groves family has participated in several community projects over the last few years. Scott and Melissa took time to attend and give input on both the Dunlap Re-Visioning Committee and Dunlap Strategic Planning. They played a huge role in the painting of the FFA Agriculture Mural. They volunteered time to help at the community 4th of July celebration by passing out waters and supervising games to ensure kids' safety. Melissa volunteered time at Art at the Park, ensuring the event's success and she and Parker were on hand to help paint/revitalize Dunlap's old carnival games. When

the new playground installation was happening at Pleasant View Park, Melissa showed up on the site with several kids in tow to help pick up sticks and prep the area. She also helped at Dunlap's Vacation Bible School this year and the Groves family picks up trash around Pleasant View Park, Dunlap's City Park, and their neighborhood on a weekly basis.

"Melissa was one of the first to sign up to help with the Dunlap Carnival," said Schaben, who was not surprised. "She and Scott are consistently giving of themselves to help others and they are passing that caring trait onto her children. We are so lucky that this family picked Dunlap."

And it sounds like the feeling is mutual.

"Honestly, what I love about Dunlap the most is the people who make up this awesome, caring community," shared Melissa. "When we first moved here there were so many unknowns and as a mom, I had many fears."

Fortunately, those fears were soon alleviated.

"The love we felt from you (Dunlap) was overwhelming and oh so amazing. We had so many visitors the first few weeks welcoming us to town. Donations of food were offered at Thanksgiving, and we were even adopted by the town that very first Christmas."

The Boyer Valley School system has also exceeded the Groves' expectations.

"Zayn's teachers were/are top notch. He's loved and included and thriving!" shared Melissa. "The love didn't stop there. When I had Bennett and then got sick, losing my other leg two years ago, the community came together yet again with get well cards, a meal train/home-cooked meals, monetary donations, offers to help with kids, clean our house, etc. It's been a year and a half since then and we still receive special little goodies dropped at our door every so often."

"Unfortunately, I know I can never really repay all those who have helped our family during one of the most difficult times of our life, but I can give back by offering my time to show how much we truly appreciate all they have done for and mean to us," Melissa shared. "I want my children to know and learn how important it is to be part of something bigger than themselves."

"I'm not much of an extrovert, but you'd be surprised at the impact and difference even the smallest person can make. Watching my kids' faces light up as they give back to our

community, that's what encouraged me to step out of my comfort zone and you know what, what a great feeling it is to give of oneself."

Melissa shared the following inspirational quote:

"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others" -Mahatma Gandhi



Left to right: Parker, Curran, Ashton, Melissa, Scott, Bennett (seated), Bryer, Hayden, Zayn, and Garrett.

Photo: Courtesy Melissa Groves