

PUBLICATION: AJC

DATE: 2/19/15

Horford films video for bullied student in Michigan

By: Chris Vivlamore

Second-grader Jayden Spalsbury has Al Horford in his corner.

The seven-year old can wear his new glasses knowing that an NBA player has his back. That should mean something to those who recently made fun of his Jayden's new look.

Jayden and Horford have never met but both live in Grand Ledge, Michigan. Horford's younger siblings went to the same school, Delta Center Elementary, currently attended by Jayden.

Jayden recently got new glasses and was excited to wear them to school as he marveled at how much clearer the world now looked. However, he was in a much different mood following the day after he was bullied. His mother started and wrote on a Facebook page, entitled New Spectacles for Jayden, about the incident.

"When Jayden got off the bus today he had a less than stellar look on his face and walked slower than usual to the car," Cody Marie Scoggins wrote as part of a post. "I asked if he was OK and how his day went. He barely responded and stared out the window. I then asked him how things looked at school with his new glasses ... that's when he took them off, started crying and told me some kids were laughing at him today and making fun of him. I know life is full of lessons and heartache but at that very moment my heart hurt with his. I wanted to take all of his hurt away. Alone, even as his mother, anything I said wasn't enough. So his little sister and I made this page together to help him realize he is not alone in wearing glasses and that a lot of people think they're cool! A couple of kids at school do not and will not decide my son's level of happiness!"

Horford got notice of Jayden's plight from family and friends in Michigan. He took time out from All-Star Weekend in New York City Saturday to film a video message to the youngster.

"Hey, Jayden, it's Al Horford of the Atlanta Hawks and I also went to Grand Ledge. I just want to let you know that wearing glasses is OK," Horford said. "Take care."

Horford then took a pair of glasses from his pocket and put them on.

"And I'm wearing glasses for you today."

The Facebook page had over 2,200 likes by Thursday. It was the idea of his five-year-old sister Brynnley.

"Hopefully this will put a stop to all this, the picking on him," Horford told the Atlanta Journal-Constitution Thursday. "It's not right. We all grew up getting picked on about something but he is a little kid and it just wasn't fair."

