



**On November 21, 2003 the PORTLAND
FIREFIGHTERS CHILDREN'S BURN FOUNDATION
helped Donald "DJ" Awalt to return home.**

- After three weeks in a Boston hospital he was discharged, in time to be home for Thanksgiving.

During his stay at the hospital DJ was visited by Sean Hanlon and Steve Turley, from the newly formed, BOSTON FIREFIGHTER'S BURN FOUNDATION. They were able to tell the family about the foundation here in Portland and they also talked to firefighters from Engine 37 Ladder 26 at Huntington Ave. These firefighters visited DJ and also

arranged transportation for DJ's grandparents from the HOSPITALITY HOME they were staying in, to the hospital and back on a daily basis. Often times the District Chief would be the one to pick them up. All of this served to give them an added sense of confidence and protection, since early in their stay Mrs. Awalt had her purse stolen, losing her wallet, credit cards and identification.

After learning of the Portland foundation from members of the Boston Firefighter's Burn Foundation, Cheryl Ventola, a patient care coordinator at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, contacted us to see if we could help with transportation home for the family. After some discussion it was decided that a quicker trip would be better and we began making calls to see what could be done. We spoke



to several commercial airlines and a couple private charters. While we talked with the commercial airlines we asked State Representatives Ed Suslovic (D-Portland) and Bob Crosthwaite (R-Ellsworth) to look into replacing Mrs. Awalt's identification, if we went



with a private charter there would be no problem. Speaking with Nate and Beth Humphrey of Twin Cities Air Service of Auburn they told us they could waive five hundred dollars bringing the cost of the charter down to \$900. The Foundation booked the flight but when we arrived the morning of the 21st, we were told that the rest of the cost had been picked up by a private donation. Businessman Michael Liberty of Gray donated the rest of the cost for the flight.



The Boston Firefighter's Burn Foundation arranged a limo for the family to get from the hospital to Hanscom Airfield in Bedford, MA for the flight to Hancock County Airport in Trenton, ME. All that remained then was to get the family from the airport to their home. Firefighters from Ellsworth IAFF Local 3402 arranged a limousine for the Awalts to get back to Ellsworth. This was a great chance for Ellsworth firefighters, who were first on scene; to see for them selves how well DJ is doing now.

The family would like everyone to know how grateful they are to all who helped them during this time. From the staff and burn trauma group at Brigham and

Women's, the firefighters from the foundation in Boston and the firefighters at Engine 37, Ladder 26. Nate and Beth Humphrey of Twin Cities Air Service, Michael Liberty of Gray and the students, firefighters and friends that met them at the airport to welcome them home.

