



Health Section

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Helping Kids Mobilize

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Families of children with disabilities face many financial challenges in getting the necessary equipment to meet their kids' needs. Kids Mobility Network, Inc. (KMN), a local non-profit organization founded by Peter and Christy Kopp in 2005, provides a resource by providing durable medical equipment (DME) such as walkers and wheelchairs to children whose families are underinsured or uninsured.

Their goal is to optimize the use of DME to enhance the lives of children with disabilities. Children often outgrow their equipment long before its useful life is exhausted; Kids Mobility Network collects used DME, reconditions it and provides it to appropriate children in need.

Inspired beginning

The idea to start KMN was inspired by the Kopp's experience with their 10-year-old daughter, Kayla, who has a rare genetic disorder named Sjogren-Larsson Syndrome.

Peter and Christy began noticing something was not quite right with Kayla's development when she was 6 months old. She was missing milestones that normally developing children do not, such as not sitting up when she was supposed to and not showing progress crawling and walking. It took about two years to get Kayla diagnosed and she now deals with her mobility limitations using DME.

When Kayla outgrew her first wheelchair, it was still in great shape. The Koppes were looking for an organization that could donate it to another child in need but they could not find one anywhere and Children's Hospital couldn't accept it because of liability issues.

"We had this great idea for the organization and it was obviously a need that wasn't filled," said Peter. "My wife and I both work full-time, but we knew we were going to do it eventually so (we) went for it in 2005."

The average price of a manual wheelchair is somewhere between \$4,000 and \$6,000. KMN donated their first piece of equipment in April 2006. At the time this article is being written, KMN will have just passed \$500,000 in donations.

Helping kids in need

Because it is so rare for a family's health insurance policy to cover needed equipment, KMN finds themselves helping kids from many different economic backgrounds.

“If you’re completely uninsured, you have almost no chance to cover all the expenses associated with your child’s situation,” he said. “And most families are at least underinsured when it comes to covering equipment. We help many families with high incomes and many families with low incomes. We’re not looking to help a particular group, we just want to help any kid that needs it.”

Developing confidence

KMN is about more than just donating medical equipment. They recognize the critical period of emotional development that children go through and how hard it is having mobility challenges. “There is a difference between a disabled child and a disabled adult,” said Peter. “A child is still developing confidence and self-awareness. It is so important they have the right equipment to interact with their peers and develop socially. They’re not going to be the soccer star, but if they’re able to interact with confidence then they’re a doer and people will see that and respect that.”

How to help

KMN has partnered with Bubble Goddess Bath Co. this weekend for a spa event fundraiser. Bubble Goddess is hosting the first annual “Loosen Up Spa Experience,” in the Inverness Business Park, offering a day of relaxation and pampering, including a 30-minute massage, 30-minute Bubble Goddess Spa Experience, robe and slippers to take home, spa lunch by Jason’s Deli and a generous goodie bag from the sponsors. Bubble Goddess aims to raise over \$15,000 for KMN. Tickets are on sale now with all proceeds going to KMN. Tickets are \$150. See below for contact information.

Kids Mobility Network, Inc.

WHAT: A non-profit organization that donates Durable Medical Equipment to families of children in need

WEB SITE: www.kidsmobility.org

Bubble Goddess Bath Company

WEB SITE AND PHONE: www.bubblegoddessbathco.com 303-589-6904 or 1-877-242-2842

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