



TAVARES

## Home builder's **big heart** blesses life of wheelchair-bound teenager

Special to the Daily Commercial

**S**aniya could not get her wheelchair through the 22-inch bathroom door in her home until Wheelchairs 4 Kids contacted the local Home Builders Association for help. Member TownSquare Construction came to the rescue.

The 13-year-old Mount Dora teenager has osteogenesis imperfecta, also known as brittle bone disease. She was born with two broken arms and two broken legs. She has had more than 40 broken bones, including her back.

The door to her bathroom was too narrow to get her wheelchair through safely until Wheelchairs 4 Kids, a nonprofit dedicated to improving the lives of children with physical disabilities, and TownSquare Construction came together to provide assistance.

Saniya is a spunky teen who loves Selina Gomez and the Florida Gators. Her favorite color is pink, and she loves to sing and dance. As a matter of fact, she has been in four community plays, and dreams of someday being a star of stage and screen. She has so much personality that everyone who meets her immediately falls in love with her.

Saniya, who lives with her grandmother, Eartha Brooks, could not get her wheelchair through the bathroom door without risking injury to her fingers and elbows. Her grandmother would have to lift her in and out of the bathroom.

Brooks contacted Wheelchairs 4 Kids to see if the agency could help. Madeline Robinson, the executive director, immediately set out to find a solution. After contacting several contractors, it became apparent that it was not going to be a simple fix.

"Due to the home design, the quotes we received were extremely prohibitive, and we weren't sure if we'd ever find a solution," Robinson said, "but our motto has always been that there is always someone out there willing to help. We just have to find them."

And find them, she did.

Linda Nagle of the Homebuilders Association of Lake-Sumter suggested Robinson contact 2011 Builder of the Year Joe Williams. Williams is president of TownSquare Construction, an award-winning custom home builder that specializes in building green homes. He immediately agreed to visit the home and was determined to help.

"Once I met Saniya and her grandmother,

SEE BIG HEART | C4



COURTESY PHOTOS

Home builder Joe Williams of TownSquare Construction poses with 13-year-old Saniya of Mount Dora. Williams and a work crew from his company recently widened the bathroom door of Saniya's grandmother's home so that she could maneuver into and out of the bathroom without hurting herself.



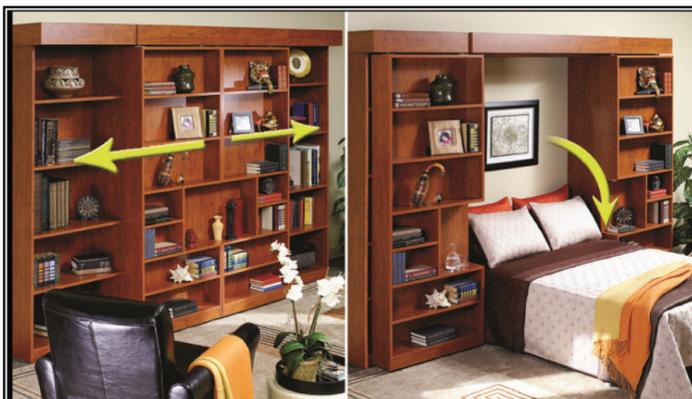
**FAR LEFT:** Before the work was completed on the bathroom door, Saniya's wheelchair would not fit through the 22-inch opening. That meant that her grandmother had to lift her out of the wheelchair and help her to the toilet.

**LEFT:** Home builder Joe Williams and his work crew give a thumbs up after Saniya was able to easily maneuver her wheelchair into the bathroom after the door was widened to 29 inches by installing a sliding pocket door.

### WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP?

Wheelchairs 4 Kids is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of children with physical disabilities. For information go to [www.wheelchairs4kids.org](http://www.wheelchairs4kids.org), or call 727-946-0963 for information on how to make a donation.

The Home Builders Association of Lake-Sumter is a non-profit trade industry association representing 240 construction companies and associated business industries. Formed in 1973, the HBA is the local affiliate of the National Association of Builders and the Florida Association of Home Builders.



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