

Making a Difference: Wheelchairs 4 Kids

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Riverview, Florida -- When children reach a certain age, it seems you can't stop them from moving. Unfortunately, some children never get the chance to start.

There are children who've never been able to run or ride a bike because they are confined to wheelchairs. But the group [Wheelchairs 4 Kids](#) is making a difference in many of their lives, by giving them the help they need to get around.

Kirsten Harwood, 18, was one of those children. She has cerebral palsy and spastic quadriplegia. She also has very weak bones that are susceptible to fractures.

Kirsten got around in a manual wheelchair that she had outgrown. It had also been damaged in an accident on her school bus. Her family hoped to get her an automated wheelchair, one that costs nearly \$50,000. Insurance would take care of much of the cost, but the Harwoods were still thousands of dollars short.

"Our son had offered to sell his horse, just so she could do things that regular kids do," said Kirsten's mother Peggy Harwood.

Luckily, Peggy Harwood heard a radio ad about Wheelchairs 4 Kids, a non-profit that not only provides funding for wheelchairs but also helps pay for home and vehicle modifications.

"Our goal is to make moms cry--happy tears," said Madeline Robinson, executive director of [Wheelchairs 4 Kids](#). "We've had kids take their first steps because of the equipment we've provided."

[Wheelchairs 4 Kids](#) picked up the remaining cost of Kirsten's new wheelchair.

"It literally goes from sitting to standing," said Peggy Harwood. "So when she's at school and she wants to get down the hallways, during regular time between classes, she'll be standing up and they'll see her. They're not going to be able to run over her. She can go to church--she can stand up and worship with everybody else."

Last year, [Wheelchairs 4 Kids](#) helped provide mobility to more than 30 children in the Bay Area. This year, the goal is 50. Helping that many children is expensive, so the organization is hosting a special fundraiser. "[A Wheely Good Time](#)" will be held on Saturday, November 2nd from 7:00-10:00pm at Ruth Eckerd Hall. It will feature cocktails, music, hors d'oeuvres and a silent auction with items like a meet-and-greet with Josh Groban, an on-set visit to the set of "Dolphin Tale 2" and a VIP table for 4 to a taping of "Hell's Kitchen."

[Click here](#) to learn about purchasing tickets to "A Wheely Good Time."

