



HONOREES—Chris and Lisa Quach of Midlothian with daughters Norah (left) and Mila (right) were honorary guests at the 13th Annual Marine Corps League Charity Golf Tournament on June 27 in Burleson. The family received a brand new, custom-fitted wheelchair for Norah from Wheelchairs 4 Kids' Madeline Robinson.

—By MEGAN NEWTON—

Wheels of Hope

United Joins Forces with Marine Corps League to Support Children with Disabilities at Annual Golf Fundraiser

When four-year-old Norah Quach from Midlothian arrived at Hidden Creek Golf Course for her big day, it was right in the middle of her regular nap time, and she was sound asleep. Like most little ones, her schedule has a rhythm all its own. As she slowly stirred, her eyes opened to a life-changing surprise: a brand-new, custom-fitted wheelchair.

The presentation was the highlight of the 13th Annual Marine Corps League Charity Golf Tournament supported in part by United Cooperative Services, aimed at helping kids gain mobility and independence.

Before receiving the new wheelchair, Norah's parents, Lisa and Chris Quach, had to rely on an infant stroller that Norah had outgrown and no longer supported her medical needs. Lisa said the new device is vital not only for Norah's physical health, but also for their family's ability to safely

transport and position her during everyday activities.

"Norah loves the sun, the air—just being outside," Lisa said. "If she could live outside, she would. The fact that the presentation is out here, I think that's why she woke up."

Norah was diagnosed with CDKL5, a complex neurological disorder that causes seizures and affects her cognitive, motor and speech functions.

Outside of the constant stream of specialist appointments, Lisa and Chris like visiting family and doing as much with Norah as they can. Until now, Lisa said they haven't had a device supportive enough to do that.

"The new wheelchair gives us peace of mind," she said. "It will help protect her body and give us safer ways to move her as she grows."

Caring for a child with complex medical needs is a

PowerTalk



BIG HEARTS, BIG SWINGS—(LEFT TO RIGHT) United employees Dane Bennett, Chad Pence, Jim Bob Nethaway and Chris White swing into action to support kids' mobility needs at annual golf event in Burleson.



THE GIFT OF MOBILITY—Norah gets fitted into her new set of wheels from Wheelchairs 4 Kids.

full-time responsibility, but for Lisa and Chris, that responsibility is multiplied. Norah's younger sister, Mila, also has serious health challenges. She was born with a heart condition that requires close monitoring.

"We battle two very intense medical worlds," Lisa said. "I had to leave my job because we couldn't find adequate care for Norah. This donation is life changing. When people step in to help like this, it lifts a huge weight off our shoulders."

The medical clinic that provides Norah with her physical therapy nominated the Quach family to receive the new wheelchair from Wheelchairs 4 Kids, a Florida-based organization that provides mobility equipment to children with physical disabilities.

The organization works closely with local seating specialists and physical therapists to ensure every child receives personalized equipment that fits both their size and their condition.

Madeline Robinson is Wheelchairs 4 Kids' founder and executive director. She has worked in children's charities since 2000 and said she's seen so many families in a state of desperation, relying on outdated, duct-taped wheelchairs that are unsafe and uncomfortable.

"Insurance only provides one wheelchair every five years," Robinson said. "Kids outgrow them faster than that, and the wrong chair can actually cause more harm than good—scoliosis, pressure sores, even breathing problems. Our job is to bridge the gap and give these kids freedom."

A Tournament That Tees Up Impact

Wheelchairs 4 Kids gifted Norah the new wheelchair on June 27 at the 13th Annual Marine Corps League Corporal Les Stevenson Charity Golf Tournament in Burleson. United Cooperative Services employees participated at this year's sold-out event.

Jack Mattson with the Marine Corps League, has led the charity event for several years. What began more than a decade ago as a small veteran-focused charity golf tournament for the Marine Corps League Longhorn Detachment 1069, has evolved into a larger event supported by the community.

"When we started this tournament, we wanted it to serve a benevolent purpose, but we weren't sure what that looked like," he said. "It was Corporal Les Stevenson—our friend, a Vietnam veteran, and the namesake of our tournament—who suggested we support disabled kids. None of this happens without community support. We're so thankful that companies like United are willing to step up year after year. Their generosity changes lives."

At the time, Wheelchairs 4 Kids didn't yet have a footprint in Texas. Now, through the Marine Corps League's annual charity golf tournament, 141 children across the state have received a mobility device from the organization.

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 **BENEFITTING**
Wheelchairs 4 Kids
www.wheelchairs4kids.org

United Tees Off to Support Wheelchairs 4 Kids

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"The funds raised through the golf tournament and the Marine Corps League have grown steadily over the years, too," Mattson said. "From \$2,000 in the early days to \$14,000 in recent years, every dollar goes directly toward equipment that families often can't afford, and insurance won't fully cover."

Thanks in part to United Cooperative Services, the Marine Corps League raised a record \$20,000 for Wheelchairs 4 Kids at this year's tournament.

Jeff Pannell, vice president of business & community development at United, has organized the electric cooperative's participation for the past three years.

"We adhere to our principle of Concern for Community and events like this allow our employees to be involved in a way that truly matters," he said. "Wheelchairs 4 Kids is doing life-changing work for families, and we're proud to play a small part in helping these kids and their families get the equipment that's so critical to their daily lives."

Local Support, Lasting Impact

United was there in 2023 when the Marine Corps League and Wheelchairs 4 Kids gifted then four-year old Sutton Salazar with a custom-fitted gate trainer to give him the assistance and support to walk independently. Now 6, Salazar returned to this year's event, where he was hon-

ored as Marine for a Day.

Salazar's mother, Cheyenne Holliday, said the gate trainer continues to be a game changer.

"I recently had surgery, and I couldn't pick him up," she said. "I was so thankful we have that device."

In addition to wheelchairs, Wheelchairs 4 Kids also provides support like vehicle and home modifications, along with therapeutic and assistive equipment.

One of Robinson's favorite initiatives is Wheelchairs 4 Kids' annual Wheely Fun Days—special excursions that give kids and their families a break from medical appointments and a chance to simply have fun. The outings offer a safe, welcoming environment for children to participate in activities like adaptive water skiing, zip lining and rock climbing.

As Robinson looked on during the post-tournament celebration, she couldn't help but smile.

"This is what it's all about," she said. "Helping one child at a time and reminding people how powerful that can be."

Another powerful reminder of the tournament's mission could be found at every tee box. Photos of children who previously received mobility equipment through Wheelchairs 4 Kids were placed at all 18 holes—a simple but moving display that reminded players exactly why they were there.

"You're not just playing for fun," Mattson said. "You're playing for someone who deserves better mobility, better access to life."



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