



## Ralph Who?

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While most people are aware of Henry Ford and his contributions to the development of the automobile only a select few know of Ralph Braun. While Ford's legacy lives on in modern vehicles – our heated seats and GPS and soon to be self-driving cars – Braun's legacy lives on in thousands of mobile special needs children across the country.

Ralph Braun was diagnosed with Muscular Dystrophy as a young boy in 1947 his inventive mind set out to normalize his world. Unable to walk he engineered the first battery-powered scooter. This gave him a freedom that children with his issues simply didn't have. But his creative mind was far from done. He then set about to design the first wheelchair lift and had it installed in an old postal Jeep. This first-generation vehicle even had hand controls.

Of course, Ford and his counterparts had now introduced the mini-van. As it turns out that was the ideal platform for what eventually became the Braun System. When you spot a handicap converted van on the road today chances are its design and lift are a product of the Braun company. Ralph's physical limitations served to fuel his determination to live independently, proving to society that people with physical issues can participate fully and actively in life.

Lori's Voice has assisted in the purchase of over 70 vehicles – all modified to allow for challenged kids and their families to enjoy freedoms that they would not otherwise have. Kids like the Fitch's, or Cole, Kelsey and Chase, Anji, Gabriel and Ali – the list goes on. Your donations, coupled with the inventive wisdom of Ralph Braun have made huge changes in their lives.

Nothing is Impossible, the word itself says

"I'm possible"

~Audrey Hepburn



THE FITCH SISTERS



ANJI



ALI

## Winds of Change

Michelle



Janelle



Mistie



As 2020 has brought many new changes, so has it been at Lori's Voice. As we say goodbye to seasoned board members, we also welcome the new.

Dave Hastings has retired, but will remain in the background as a supporting member. Marj Williams, our dedicated secretary and one of the original founders has stepped down to enjoy family and traveling.

Ray Breiding who has a fluent medical background has also taken his leave. While Scott Noto was recently elected as Kent County Circuit Judge, he too will be moving on. We thank each of you for your countless hours of service and dedication. You will be greatly missed.

New to our board are Michelle Vlug, Janelle Gunn and our first time ever part-time employee Mistie

Bowser, as our communication specialist.

Each of these very competent ladies bring something unique to the table. It is our hope that they will help keep us up to speed and empower us to assist more children.

We are looking for a few new board members. Perhaps this is YOU? If you know of anyone please contact us.

## Hitch'n a Ride

Rides come in many shapes and sizes, for our special kids at Lori's Voice these modes of transportation are not only necessary but can be fun as well. We are an important ingredient in delivering mobility to our kids. We have assisted with manual wheelchairs, power chairs, sports chairs, beach wheelchairs, trax machines, handicap vans, adaptive strollers, wagons, specialized bikes and lift chairs. These kids are all different from one another so their transportation needs vary a lot - hitch'n a ride requires the right equipment. We have purchased many different rides for our kids over the years. We thank all of you who send us monetary gifts throughout the year.

### Disability Etiquette

Have you ever found yourself in the company of a person in a wheelchair and not known how to react? A nice thing to do is to kneel down beside them so you can look them directly in the eyes when carrying a conversation. If they are verbal, steer clear from asking their caregiver for answers they themselves can provide. This simple act of kindness will make both parties more comfortable.



## The Crew Cut

While the Crew at The Salon Co. in Zeeland did not get cut. It did shut down its doors for several months during the Covid Pandemic.

Upon reopening, the owner graciously gave her first day's earnings to Lori's Voice! What a thoughtful way to help our kids!

All random act of kindness

to help our kids at Lori's Voice, are blessings that we never take for granted.

It is not only these folks, but many others who have donated through cider and donut stands, t-shirt sales, and even a sidewalk musician who played her little heart out to earn money for Lori's Voice!

Every dollar helps us to assist the countless families that apply to us and we thank you.



## Good Night Sunshine

Remember when you were a kid? – first the cradle, then the crib and finally you got your own big kid bed. Certainly, a coming of age ritual that you were no doubt very proud of.

This process takes on an entirely new challenge for parents of special children. Allow me introduce you to 5 year

old Kenzie. A sweet little lady that has just enough mobility to get herself into trouble. Kenzie has a rare disease that makes her move to the big kid bed a lot tougher.

She lacks adequate spatial awareness to prevent herself from falling from high spaces.

The Sleep Safe Bed System with a lift mechanism, was denied by Insurance. That's were Lori's Voice stepped in and purchased this unique bed for Kenzie. Hopefully Mom and Dad can get a good night's sleep, knowing their toddler is safe.



Kenzie

Did you know?  
We collect Family Fare & D&W Fresh Receipts. Send them to us at Lori's Voice, PO Vox 66, Coopersville, MI 49494 or turn them in at L & L Printing in Coopersville.

 SpartanNash



## Can't Stop Us

While 2020 came in like whirlwind, it did not stop us at Lori's Voice from doing what we do best. That is helping special needs children with many medical devices that insurance doesn't cover.

Many folks have come on hard times due to the pandemic. Some are finding themselves again on

lockdown as the number of testing's are up. That said, children are born every day with special needs and we will continue to assist them as best we can.

It's during these tough times when we are unable to host our annual fundraisers that we count on you.

Many of you generously give on a monthly basis. Thank you seems so inadequate, know that all gifts add up and we are just as grateful for the small donations as we are with corporate donations. You can and are making a huge difference in the lives of so many children. God bless you for your continued support.

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Visit us at:

**www.lorisvoice.org**

*Thank you to Zokoe TEAM five star\* for sponsoring this Newsletter!*



**About Us**

Lori's Voice a 501(c) (3) Charity provides funding for equipment, therapy and medical assistance to children with neuromuscular and degenerative diseases.

Board Members: Lori Hastings, Michelle Vlug, Janelle Gunn, Marianne Hunderman and Duane Kluting

