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LEXINGTON

Parents of 4-year-old with cerebral palsy seek help to buy van for son's wheelchair

Posted by Matt Rocheleau October 5, 2011 07:41 AM

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By **Matt Rocheleau**, Town Correspondent

The family of a 4-year-old with severe cerebral palsy will hold a benefit this weekend to raise money for a vehicle that can transport the boy's motorized wheelchair – his only source of independence – to and from his Woburn home and Lexington school.



(Courtesy: Deharo family)
Four-year-old Colby Deharo

Because his parents do not have the means to transport young Colby Deharo's motorized wheelchair, it is kept at the Cotting School, a special needs school he began attending last fall.

When he is anywhere else but at school, Jeff

and Tracy Deharo's only son needs another person to move him in a non-motorized wheelchair because, while he is cognitively aware, his parents say Colby lacks the motor skills to control the manual chair himself.

"He's not able to sit up, stand or walk on his own," his 36-year-old mother said by phone this week. "He's four years old and he wants his independence. It's upsetting for him because he's so bright and he knows what he's not able to do."

Colby has enough control in his hand to use a joystick on the motorized wheelchair in order to get around independently, she said.

Even transporting the manual wheelchair is a task because it needs to be disassembled, according to the family. The boy's parents hope to raise enough money to put a down payment on and be able to afford finance payments for a handicapped accessible van that costs between \$70,000 and \$80,000.

On Saturday at the Sons of Italy on Lexington Street in Woburn, Colby's family will host a fundraiser from 5 to 10 p.m. that will include raffles prizes, a 50/50 raffle, a silent auction, dancing, light food and a cash bar.

Colby's father Jeff Deharo, a Navy veteran, said the silent auction will feature a lot of sports-related items including: four luxury suite tickets to a New England Patriots game, four sets of tickets to watch the Stanley Cup-defending Boston Bruins, a hockey stick signed by Bruins goaltender and last year's Stanley Cup

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MVP Tim Thomas, and several items signed by retired local boxer Mickey Ward.

Raffle items will include 30 prizes valued at a minimum of \$100 each, including jewelry and roundtrip airplane tickets.

Available both in advance and at the door, tickets to the fundraiser are \$20 for adults; parents can use their own discretion when paying for admission for children under 12, the family said.

Donations will be accepted at the Oct. 8 event or by mailing a check made out to “Colby Deharo” to: 1 Spring Garden Terrace, Woburn, MA, 01801.

Colby’s parents expressed thanks for the support and donations they’ve received so far.

“We’ve been doing well so far,” said Tracy Deharo. “The community has been extremely supportive.”

For more info, visit the benefit’s Facebook event page by [clicking here](#).

E-mail Matt Rocheleau at mjrochele@gmail.com.



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