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Grant provides bicycles for people with special needs Fittings took place in Villa Park last week

By Chris Fox

LOMBARDIAN-VILLA PARK REVIEW STAFF REPORTER

A Hinsdale couple's gift in memory of their late son to Easter Seals DuPage and Fox Valley is granting adapted bicycles to people with special needs.

Dick and Elise Goets—the parents of Jonathan Goets—funded the Jonathan Goets Bike Club, which launched last week at the Easter Seals DuPage and Fox Valley facility at 830 S. Addison Ave., Villa Park.

About 25 people with developmental disabilities were fitted for a new adapted bicycle at the facility on Aug. 18. They will receive their new bicycles at next month's Bike for the Kids event, which will take place at Easter Seals DuPage and Fox Valley's Elgin Center on Sept. 17.

Easter Seals physical therapists teamed with Hal Honeyman of The Bike Rack in St. Charles to conduct the fittings in Villa Park last week. Honeyman explained that a part of The Bike Rack's shop—known as Creative Mobility—helps to provide custom-fit bikes to a variety of people with special needs.

"We work all over the country—with kids, injured vets," said Honeyman. "We're assessing people for bikes based on their needs. Some people just need a minor modification. Some people need custom bikes made from the ground up."

Honeyman has been helping to custom-design bikes for people with special needs for over 20 years. He became motivated to adapt bicycles because his son, who is now 24 years old, has cerebral palsy.

Jonathan Goets passed away in 2016 at the age of 37. When he was 11 years old, Jonathan suffered severe injuries after being struck by a train in Hinsdale. According to the DuPage Railroad Safety Council, his injuries "left him blind, quadriplegic and with the cognitive ability of an infant for the remainder of his life."

The Jonathan Goets Bike Club was established to share Jonathan's love of bicycling with those who have developmental disabilities and may not otherwise have the chance to own or ride a bicycle. The program provides the bicycles free of charge.

"This generous gift will allow us to share Jonathan's love of bike riding with the children of Easter Seals DuPage and Fox Valley," stated Theresa Forthofer, chief executive officer and president of DuPage Easter Seals and Fox Valley. "These adaptive bikes will help many children enjoy the independence of mobility and take part in a fun activity with friends and family."

"As a parent with special needs children, I know the impact bike riding has to a child's development," added Forthofer. "A child's first bike enriches their health and social development to grow alongside



their peers."

Easter Seals DuPage and Fox Valley, which was founded in 1952, is one of the largest pediatric outpatient rehabilitation centers in the nation. It serves nearly 3,200 infants, children and adults with therapy and audiology

services each year.

The mission of Easter Seals DuPage and Fox Valley is to enable infants, children and adults with disabilities to achieve their maximum independence, and to provide support for the families who love and care for them.



CHRIS FOX PHOTOS Villa Park Review

Custom fitting

Physical therapists from the Easter Seals DuPage and Fox Valley facility in Villa Park worked with Hal Honeyman of The Bike Rack in St. Charles to provide custom fittings for adaptive bicycles to people with developmental disabilities. About 25 people who visit the Easter Seals facility in Villa Park were fitted for bicycles on Aug. 18. The top photo shows physical therapist Laura Basi (left) with Scottie Sullivan (age 6) and Scottie's dad, Chris Sullivan (right). The photo at right shows Honeyman (left) with Nick Pagonis (right). The photo at left shows physical therapist Joanne Pygon (left) watching Sophia Brokos (age 12) test out a bicycle. Sophia is being helped by her mother, Kristine Brokos.



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