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# Jamming out for a good cause

BY MATTHEW OLSON

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Contributions gathered from a weekend of music are being used to brighten the spirits of a local boy dealing with cerebral palsy.

June's Bloomin' Bands event brought dozens of bands and many visitors to downtown Kenosha. The Downtown Kiwanis Club of Kenosha partnered with the Boys and Girls Club and Crossroads of Kenosha, a group of local musicians, to piece the event together. Sponsorship came in from groups around the city, including: Kenosha Area Convention and Visitor's Bureau, Gruber Law Offices, Dental Associates, Snap-on, Kenosha News, CJW, Uline, the city of Kenosha and TriCity National Bank.

One of the goals of Bloomin' Bands was to use the funds to make over the room of a local youth with serious health concerns.

"The Downtown Kiwanis serves the youth of the community, and if we made money this is how we decided we would use the proceeds," said Ron Bursek, of the Downtown Kiwanis.

The Kiwanis' share of the event's profit was about \$2,000. The organization then came in contact with the Hellwig family of Pleasant Prairie, who attend the same church as Bursek.

Carter Hellwig, who turns 11 later this month, was delivered by emergency Caesarean section four weeks early when doctors determined he was in fetal distress. He was born with 20 percent of the blood he should have had due to a kink in the umbilical cord.

Carter was diagnosed with spastic quadriplegia cerebral palsy at 4 months, which has impaired his vision and breathing and has caused severe scoliosis. His motions are mostly limited to turning his head and moving his eyes.

Carter has undergone at least 18 surgeries. He took part in a five-kilometer run earlier this year at Lambeau Field, where he was pushed in a special wheelchair.

"It seemed like the perfect match for what we wanted to do and to meet their needs," Bursek said of the room remodeling project. "Carter is quite the young man. We met with them and they were surprised we made the offer, but they were enthusiastic about moving forward."

Kathy Hellwig said she and her husband, Dean, cried after Bursek told them of the plan for their son's room.

“Carter was beyond thrilled,” Kathy Hellwig said.

Changes welcome

Much of Carter's day is spent in his room. He also has been attending classes through the Wisconsin Virtual Academy from the room for the last two years, but the space for a desk is limited, and glare can make work difficult for Carter.

Carter has two younger sisters, Olivia, 9, and Sophia, 6. Olivia deals with vision and medical issues, and Kathy Hellwig said many of the treatments they have sought for her fall outside of what is covered by insurance. Kathy said that changes are needed for Carter's room as he grows older, but the other medical costs have kept the family from being able to make them.

“It would be a big help to have this room changed sooner rather than later,” Kathy Hellwig said. “If we had to do this, it could take five to seven years. The older Carter gets, the more equipment we need. And we need to have more storage because of the medical supplies he needs. He spends enough time in the hospital that his room shouldn't have to look like he's in the hospital, too.”

The family compiled a list of changes and additions to the room to make it more accessible and functional for Carter, such as a more accessible bathroom, lighting that is easier on his eyes and a television screen that can be mounted and result in less strain when he's looking at it.

Further assistance needed

The money from Bloomin' Bands will provide the start for this work, and additional contributions — such as a television from Fec's Place and a ceiling bracket from Our Kenosha Tap — are coming in. Bursek said further assistance will be needed to accomplish all of the goals for the bedroom remodeling.

“This is all new to us,” Bursek said. “We are very confident that we can get these things done, it just will likely take longer than we had hoped.”

Anyone interested in donating time, effort or money to this cause can contact Bursek at 262-605-0805.



[Larger image](#)

*KENOSHA NEWS PHOTO BY MATTHEW OLSON*

Pleasant Prairie resident Kathy Hellwig talks to her son, Carter, about the planned renovations for his bedroom. The room is being redone by the Downtown Kiwanis Club of Kenosha and Crossroads of Kenosha in part with money raised by this year's Bloomin' Bands event.