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OUTPOURING OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR 11-YEAR-OLD WITH SPECIAL NEEDS "She Makes Every Hard Day So Worth It"

CHESAPEAKE, Va.—Within 24 hours of her birth, Christina Taylor Moore began fighting for her life. After experiencing back-to-back seizures, she was diagnosed with a rare illness. Now 11 years old, Christina is living with physical and cognitive disabilities. The Chesapeake community is coming together to help bring a critical need within reach: a wheelchair accessible van so she can continue to engage with her community—and visit a dream destination: Sesame Place in Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

Born in 2011, Christina experienced seizures and a three-week stay in the NICU. Doctors diagnosed her with the rare disease Ohtahara Syndrome, an uncommon type of epilepsy that leads to developmental delays and seizures that are difficult to treat and are likely to get more severe over time.

The 11-year-old cannot talk, walk, sit up by herself, or eat solid foods. Her mother's goal is simple: to keep Christina as healthy and seizure-free as possible. She takes three medications twice per day and uses a tube to eat and drink. Home medical equipment is a must, including physical therapy gear, medical shoes, and braces for overnight wear. She receives physical, occupational, and speech therapy as part of her schooling in 5th grade at Grass Field Elementary. The pandemic kept Christina away from school for two years.

Elizabeth Leemon, Christina's mom, is a dedicated and passionate home health care nurse who is raising her special daughter on her own: "She has a smile and a sweet soul that will immediately win your heart. She makes every hard day so worth it."

Among the family's hardships is a lack of accessible transportation, limiting Christina's access to critical care and community outings as she continues to grow. That's why Elizabeth turned to the national medical fundraising nonprofit Help Hope Live to start a campaign: https://helphopelive.org/campaign/19996/



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"Having a wheelchair accessible van will allow Christina the freedom to travel and visit her family more," said Elizabeth. Christina is also a huge fan of Sesame Street. An accessible van will mean the ability to plan a special trip for Christina to Sesame Place in Pennsylvania.

"We can't appreciate you all enough," wrote Elizabeth on Christina's fundraising page. "It takes a village to raise a child, but it takes the world to raise a special needs child."

Make a donation at any time at: <u>https://helphopelive.org/campaign/19996/</u>

Donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law, and all funds raised will be managed by the nonprofit to cover verified medical and related expenses. Help Hope Live verifies medical and financial need for every patient.

Help Hope Live is a national nonprofit that specializes in engaging communities in secure, taxdeductible fundraising campaigns for people who need a transplant or are affected by a catastrophic injury or illness. Since 1983, campaigns organized by Help Hope Live have raised over \$165 million to pay patient expenses.

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