



Help Hope Live

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COMMUNITY COMING TOGETHER TO HELP DISABLED LOCAL VOLUNTEER Fundraising Will Allow Melinda Thornton to Keep Volunteering and Serving Ogden

OGDEN, Utah—Melinda Thornton has been giving back as a volunteer and board member for decades. Now, her Ogden community is coming together during Melinda's own time of need. Working with the nonprofit Help Hope Live, the community has started a fundraising campaign to meet a critical need for Melinda: purchasing an accessible van.

61-year-old Melinda has been living with a severe degenerative bone disease that has kept her reliant on a wheelchair to retain her mobility for the last 10 years. Melinda was born and raised in Ogden and has a son, now married, and two daughters, who will be relocating to Seattle for college this fall. She and her striking service dog, Raven, are frequent sights in the area.

Melinda cares deeply about giving back to the Ogden community as a volunteer and advocate. She worked and volunteered for Catholic Community Services from 2006 to 2008, and she has served on the Board of Directors for Ogden Weber Community Action Partnership for more than a decade. Most Sunday afternoons, Melinda travels to Municipal Park to help the homeless community in Ogden.

For Melinda, a wheelchair accessible van is a non-negotiable investment—without one, she would be unable to volunteer or engage with her community safely and consistently. Melinda's current van has aged significantly with rusting, failed electrical components, and a warped and unsafe ramp for her electric wheelchair.

Despite the necessity, her insurance will not assist with the cost of safe accessible transportation—"They claim that a ramp and van aren't necessary since I'm using an electric wheelchair," explained Melinda. To purchase a safer used van, she will have to come up with \$45,000 or more out-of-pocket.

To help with this significant financial burden, the Ogden community has started a medical fundraising campaign in partnership with the national nonprofit Help Hope Live. Donations are tax deductible and can be made at: <https://helpholive.org/campaign/20409/>



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Unlike a GoFundMe, Melinda's Help Hope Live campaign is medically verified, and funds raised are administered by the nonprofit to cover only verified medical and related expenses, including accessible transportation. Crucially, the funds raised will not count as income or assets to Melinda, which means fundraising won't jeopardize her eligibility for benefits like Medicaid and disability.

Help Hope Live is a national nonprofit that specializes in engaging communities in secure, tax-deductible 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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