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DEC 20 FUNDRAISER TO HELP 28-YEAR-OLD WITH DEBILITATING LONG COVID

COVID Took Samantha's Mobility—You Can Help Her Get It Back

COLUMBIA, S.C.—On Tuesday, December 20, the community will come together to enjoy delicious Chicago-style pizza while giving back to an important cause: a fundraiser in honor of 28-year-old Samantha Youmans. Samantha is living with both muscular dystrophy and the debilitating long-term health impact of COVID-19. She is partnering with the national fundraising nonprofit Help Hope Live to help fund a critical need: a reliable accessible van.

Dec 20 Fundraiser Details:

- Tuesday, December 20 from 11 a.m. to midnight
- Old Chicago Pizza, 802 Gervais St., Suite 100, Columbia, SC 29201
- Mention Samantha Youmans and 10% of order will be donated to Help Hope Live in her honor
- Event website: <https://events.helphopelive.org/event/5746/signup/>
- Contact: Andrew Babcock, 843-769-0350

About Samantha:

28-year-old Samantha Youmans has been living with muscular dystrophy since she was born. She and husband Sergeant Justin Youmans—a National Guardsman—have lived in Columbia since 2017 when Samantha started a local job at Peacock Hyundai. That trajectory was abruptly halted by a major health emergency: a life-threatening COVID-19 diagnosis.

Despite showing no prior symptoms, in August 2021, Samantha suddenly fell ill while working from home and was rushed to the hospital by ambulance. She was placed in a medically induced coma for 7 days. When she awoke, she had no feeling in the lower part of her left leg.

The COVID-19 Delta variant SARS CoV-2 exacerbated her body's existing muscle weakness due to muscular dystrophy. As a result, doctors told Samantha that she would likely not be able to walk again independently.

Samantha is now living with long COVID, which has left her with major lung scarring that leaves her dependent on 24/7 supplemental oxygen. She also lives with mental health challenges linked to the diagnosis and the subsequent physical trauma her body endured. Due to all the health challenges and ongoing rehabilitation needs that she faces, Samantha has been forced to end her local career. She is now dependent on disability payments and community support to stay healthy and active.

As Samantha has pursued intensive rehabilitation and home health care throughout 2021 and 2022, she and her husband have had to plan for a future in which she would need to use a wheelchair full-time. Along with those preparations came one pressing unmet need: safe and reliable wheelchair-accessible transportation.

Public transportation options limit how far Samantha can travel to pursue ongoing rehabilitation and see specialists—including professionals who can maximize her chances of walking again. “There are some really amazing opportunities,” Samantha explained, “but without the proper transportation, I cannot get there.”

That’s why she turned to Help Hope Live, a trusted medical fundraising nonprofit.

Donations can be made at: <https://helphopelive.org/campaign/20503/>

With a reliable van, Samantha will be able to drastically change her capacity to engage with her community and give back as she finds a new normal with long COVID. “I love to help people and work with people,” she explained. “I can’t wait to have those options back.”

Unlike a GoFundMe, donations to Help Hope Live in Samantha’s honor 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. Funds raised will not jeopardize her state-based disability benefits.

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. ###