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Story:

8 year old girl will enjoy her mobility!

“Mulliganeers present Sophia Jablonski with Conversion Van”

Sophia Jablonski is an absolutely beautiful and intelligent little 8 year old girl with cerebral palsy. She had a rough start being the sole survivor of triplets born at 25 weeks. Sophia was named a miracle baby.

The Jablonski family has health insurance and they have reached out to state agencies for additional assistance. **One agency provided a special wheelchair but Sophia and her wheelchair did not fit in the family vehicle. The family needed a conversion van but did not have the financial resources to purchase one.** The Mulliganeers heard their call for help and thanks to this small group of dedicated men and women, Sophia and her family will be receiving the assistance they need. A newly converted van was acquired with the help of Bill Haggerty from Mike Haggerty Buick Pontiac GMC Trucks in Oak Lawn. **The van will be presented complements of the Mulliganeers to Sophia and her family at the 15th Annual Mulliganeers Golf Outing at Cog Hill Golf and Country Club in Lemont on Friday, July 31, 2009.**

Mulliganeers is a nonprofit organization dedicated to raising funds for children in need of healthcare and special services. “The children we assist have serious medical issues and the financial burden is sometimes too much for their families to bear,” stated Pat Byrne, President and one of the founding members of the Mulliganeers. **“We**

bridge the gap between what our recipients' insurance pays and government agencies support and the needs of the children."

Byrne reflected on his personal experience, being the recipient of the generosity of friends who held a fund raiser for his children when his wife passed away. "The financial gift we received did more than help us through the financial challenges we were facing. It gave us the psychological boost we needed, knowing that we were not alone during a very difficult time."

Byrne knew the financial and emotional impact the generosity of his friends had on him and his family. He also knew that many families experience the difficulties he faced without help. He committed making a difference in the lives of others. He approached a small group of life long friends and together they organized the Mulliganeers.

"A mulligan is a golfing term where the golfer is given a second chance on a golf shot. **A Mulliganeer is someone who is dedicated to giving children a second chance at life. Simple as that,**" Byrne shared, **"We help get families on their feet when they are facing difficult times as a result of their child's illness."**

The Mulliganeers Board of Directors has seen the need for assistance grow over the years. **"The expenses our recipient families face as a result of medical conditions drain their savings and max out their insurance. This leaves them scrambling for resources from government sources and other charities. When we learn of their need, they have hit their limits financially, emotionally and physically. They have nowhere else to turn,"** stated Gloria Burjek, CPA and accountant for the Mulliganeers.

Recent reports show that 60% of bankruptcies are linked to medical bills and of those three-quarters had health insurance. **Bankruptcies related to medical bills have increased at a growing rate of nearly 50% in the last six years.** The profile of people filing for medical bankruptcy is the middle-class, well-educated homeowner. **(American Journal of Medicine August 2009)**

Organized 15 years ago, the Mulliganeers see a growing number of families falling on financially hard times as a result of health problems and know they could make a difference. The **original group of four grew to 25 Board of Directors and multiple committees, all professional men and women willing to donate their time, talent, money and connections to this worthy cause.** Funds are raised through donations and annual events. Distributions to families in need are made in the same fiscal year.

Over the **past 15 years the Mulliganeers have raised and dispersed nearly \$3 million to 165 families.** To learn more about the Mulliganeers, register for the Golf Outing or make a donation visit their website at www.mulliganeers.org or contact Julie at 630-724-9321.