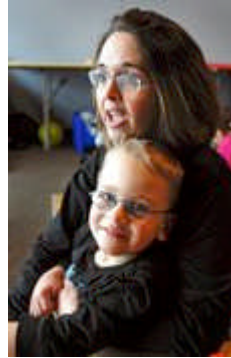


# Sunday News

## Pedal power Wheels of good fortune spin for a playground for children with disabilities

By Marty Crisp, Sunday News Staff Writer mcrisp@lnpnews.com

More than 200 people rode long and hard Saturday, pumping the pedals on stationary bikes set up in two adjoining skyboxes at Clipper Magazine Stadium. For eight hours, they followed spin routines led by trainers from a half-dozen area gyms and recreation centers, places that had loaned the 2008 Spin-A-Thon Benefit 136 sleek spinning bikes.



Participants clapped and swayed to Elvis music as they sprinted. They tightened their wheel clamps for power climbs as they looked out over Barnstormers' home plate. Then they "hovered" and "jumped" to the song, "I Like to Move It, Move It."

But did they ever cross a finish line?

"We raised more than \$16,000 for Daniel's Den Playground," said Lynne Zanowski, a personal trainer and media relations manager for LET SPIN, or Lancaster Events to Support People In Need.



Saturday's event was called "Biking to Break the Barriers" in honor of Daniel Haldeman, 4, who has cerebral palsy. His mom, Denise Haldeman of East Hempfield Township, is the creator of Daniel's Den Playground, a place where Daniel will be able to slide and swing like other kids. Before Saturday, her playground committee had raised \$161,000 toward "the build," slated for April 22 to 27.

As it turns out, the \$375,000 handicapped-accessible playground, a mile south of Mountville, is a lot like Spin-A-Thon. It's a grassroots effort led by people dedicated to making a difference in their community.

This will be the first Lancaster County playground geared toward children with disabilities. It is modeled very loosely on Possibility Place in Harrisburg.

"When are we going to go play on my playground?" Daniel asked as he rolled happily on the floor of the Spin-A-Thon kids' room.

"This will really open things up for him," his mother said as she adjusted Daniel on her lap so he could reach a game of Whack-A-Mole. "Typical public playgrounds are off limits to him. This will make such a difference in his life."

Making a difference is also what Spin-A-Thon tries to do, Zanowski said. In previous years, they've raised funds to fight leukemia and to support the Water

Street Rescue Mission. Last year's Spin-A-Thon raised \$6,500.

"This is a really good cause," said Alex Kelso, 16, of East Hempfield Township, one of 36 people who rode for eight hours straight. "And a personal challenge."

"It's a great thing to do with friends," said Harrison LaRosa, 66, of Millersville. A one-time Ironman triathlete, he spent three hours spinning.

Money and pledges from this year's spinners supports the 12,500-square-foot playground ([www.danielsdenplayground.org](http://www.danielsdenplayground.org)) that will be built on land donated by Manor Church. "The Build" will need the muscle power of 1,000 volunteers.

Some 600 are signed up, but 400 more are needed, including carpenters, unskilled construction workers, food servers, child care providers and nurses. The playground will feature ramps, a poured rubber or sponge tile surface, transfer stations, high-backed swings and spring toys, a wheelchair swaying platform, an elevated sand table, and a double-width slide for buddy sliding.

"I was so excited when LET SPIN called me last fall and said they wanted to help," Haldeman said.

"According to Schreiber Pediatric," added Lisa Seaman of Mountville whose son, Caden, 3, has autism and cerebral palsy. "We have at least 4,000 kids in Lancaster County who could use a special-needs playground."

For more information, call playground volunteer coordinator Deb Franssen at 872-6013.

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