

Girl Receives the Gift of Independence from CReATE | CPD

Sue Reeves

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Selena and her dad share a smile after she gives her wheelchair a test run

Selena Perez thought she was coming to a routine meeting with her parents at her school. Instead she was wheeled into the media center at Willow Valley Middle School to discover a new-to-her motorized wheelchair—and the small crowd of people who came together to make it possible.

The sight moved her to tears. Through an interpreter she asked if it was to be used only at school. The answer came back: she could use it at home, too.

Selena's family is from Mexico. She has used a wheelchair for most of her life.

The refurbished chair was made possible by staff members of the Cache County School District Office and CReATE, a nonprofit organization under the [Utah Assistive Technology Program](#) that puts affordable mobility devices into the hands of Utahns who need it.

CReATE is part of the Center for Persons with Disabilities and the Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services at Utah State University. Staff members from the Cache County School District Office contacted the program and contributed to the cost of the motorized chair.

District special education director Joel Allred said Selina was doing well in school, but the people at the district office wanted her to have more independence. Until that

day, she had needed an aide to push her from class to class.

"It's very nice," she said in a quiet moment, after posing for pictures and taking her first turn around the room. "I'll be able to go to the kitchen when I want a drink."

"We won't be battling with the wheelchair to move her from one spot to another," her father said through an interpreter. "Now her self-esteem will increase because she can move herself around."

This story was written by JoLynne Lyon and originally appeared on the [EEJ EdNotes blog](#) on Tuesday, Dec. 10, 2013.