

CReATE Matches its Own Record

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Refurbished mobility devices await new homes in the CReATE warehouse

By Talia Pratte

Citizens Reusing Assistive Technology (CReATE), matched its record of placing 15 mobility devices during the month of August. CReATE gives used power wheelchairs, manual wheelchairs and power scooters new life. The reutilization of mobility devices keeps them out of landfills and out in the community, improving the lives of people with disabilities.

Led by Thomas Boman, the Program Director, CReATE accepts donations of used mobility devices and keeps them at its facility in Salt Lake City.

Before starting at CReATE two years ago, Boman worked as a safety engineer for 12 years.

"I had an injury to my balance nerve, so I had to reassess my life," Boman said. "It gave me an appreciation for what some of these folks go through."

In an average month, CReATE places 12.5 refurbished mobility devices, Boman said. In August, the program matched its record of 15, with even less work time than usual.

"Here's the cool thing," Boman said. "We actually shut down for a week to clean and organize, and we still met that record."

When someone inquires about a mobility device, they are evaluated to see if CReATE has a mobility device in its inventory that can meet the consumer's needs. CReATE

does not sell mobility devices, but there is a fee that covers the cost of labor to refurbish each device and the new batteries.

A new power wheelchair from another source can cost anywhere from \$2,500 to \$35,000.

"Anything electric is \$250, and then the battery cost would be in addition to the \$250," Boman said. "The average cost is between \$350 and \$560."

This service allows for many consumers to receive mobility devices they otherwise couldn't afford and saves those in need thousands of dollars.

The services CReATE provides are possible because of the staff, volunteers and donations.

"One of the constants in CReATE is the influx of donations," Boman said.

About 20 mobility devices are donated every month and there is always a need for more, he said. Donations are usually tax-deductable.

In the future, Boman sees CReATE providing even more devices every month, thanks in part to five regular volunteers who help refurbish the mobility devices. Volunteers are always needed and welcomed at CReATE.

"By the end of this year, I'd like to hit 20 a month" he said. "Especially with the returning volunteers, they're getting a lot more skills and if we get additional volunteers, I think we could do that."

To inquire about inventory, e-mail tamara.wulle@usu.edu. To inquire about devices or donations, call (801) 887-9398.

CReATE is part of the Utah Assistive Technology Program, housed at Utah State University's Center for Persons with Disabilities.