

New wheels from CReATE! | CPD

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Aubrey Taylor with her two young sons and her "new" refurbished wheelchair from CReATE

By Aubrey Taylor

www.wheelchairmom.com

I'm so excited to tell you the story of my wheelchair miracle, and why I'm so grateful for people in the world who *care*.

So when I originally bought a wheelchair (more than a year ago), we didn't think I'd need it for very long so we got the cheapest one we could find off of good old Amazon. It did the trick, and I was certainly grateful to have it, but it was definitely nothing fancy. I had been holding off on buying a new one in hopes that I'd get better, so by this summer I was definitely past due for an upgrade! After Gordon turned one, and I had to keep up with two rowdy toddlers, we decided it was time to invest in a nicer chair. I met with my physiatrist again to get his thoughts, and he wrote up a wheelchair prescription for me.

And so my wheelchair hunt began! What an ordeal. I contacted my insurance to find out what they could do for me. They let me know what percentage of the price they could cover for a wheelchair, and gave me a list of

some in-network wheelchair providers I could contact. I spent weeks and weeks researching, talked to multiple companies, had wheelchair fittings, played phone tag with way too many people, got a letter of medical necessity from my physical therapist, dealt with pushy salesmen and frustrating customer service reps, did the math with finances, got stressed out of my brains, started hunting eBay.... It was like 2 months of crazy stress and I was terribly discouraged. No matter what angle we looked at it, we were going to be paying at least \$1500-\$2000 to get a chair that would fit my needs, and that's after insurance would cover their portion.

I was so upset. It wasn't just for my own situation, but I was frustrated for every person who had to go through this terrible ordeal to be able to get the things they need in order to function in daily life. Your wheelchair is like your other leg. It's important and you use it. People should be able to have a positive experience getting assistive technology, and not have to break the bank to get what they need.

Well, I learned that I'm not the only person who cares about this issue! My dear husband works for the Center for Persons with Disabilities at Utah State University. It turns out, there's a super awesome program based out of there, started specifically because of this problem I'm having. Someone cared enough to make things better.

Let me introduce you to [CReATe](#): Citizens Reutilizing Assistive Technology Equipment.

CReATE is a non-profit organization that refurbishes donated mobility equipment and makes it available at a low-cost to Utahns with disabilities.

My husband talked to Clay Christensen, the lab coordinator of CReATE, about my situation, and Clay basically told him to stop everything we're doing because he's about to solve all of our problems. "We can get her a great chair to fit exactly what she needs. Do you think you could spare about \$150?"

Jaws to the floor and tears in my eyes, YES. After stressing about the \$2,000 number we were quoted, \$150 is BEAUTIFUL. They told us they could refurbish a top of the line chair so it's like new for me for that flat rate.

You can imagine the burden that was lifted off my shoulders at the end of this conversation. I was THRILLED. So we drove down to their location in Salt Lake City, and they were all just fabulous to work with! Tom Boman found me a chair that was just the right size and style, and fixed it up beautifully for me. A Quickie 2,

the type of chair that was recommended to me by others and quoted to me at outrageous prices. We picked it up a couple of weeks later for the lovely promised rate of \$150. He made sure I had everything I needed. The perfect seat height and width for optimal wheeling, a nice cushion, great wheels to suit my needs, the whole package. I've been wheeling around in it all week as if I got a brand new sports car!

Aubrey Taylor is a young mom from Hyrum, Utah, who acquired a disability following her second pregnancy. [Read more of her story.](#)