

NEWS

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Rotary and a nonprofit partner steer adaptive trikes to special-needs kids

OC's Special Spokes will assist Camp Pendleton's Worland family.

For a young family living at Camp Pendleton with a special-needs child, an organization like OC's Special Spokes is a godsend.

"Bikes have been a safety issue for us," Taylor Worland said of Julie, a 4-year-old with a traumatic brain injury. "She has a tough time balancing, so she falls."

Taylor and her husband, Marine Corps Capt. Craig Worland, are in the final stages of adopting Julie, recognizing that they are bringing challenges into their home but relishing what they can do for her, as Taylor has a background working with children with special needs.

While exploring a San Clemente Life page on Facebook, Taylor spotted a post about how the organization OC's Special Spokes was making adaptive tricycles available, and how the San Clemente Rotary Club had offered to underwrite five for San Clemente kids.

"We are very involved in San Clemente," Taylor said. "We love the rec department and downtown. San Clemente has been really good to us, being mili-



FRED SWEGLES, STAFF

Special Spokes' Susan Hoang, left, and Taylor Worland, soon-to-be adoptive mother, help give Julie, 4, her first ride on an adaptive tricycle.

tary."

The Worlands, living at the north end of the base, have taken the city up on its offer of granting resident discounts and scholarships for recreation programs to military families from north Camp Pendleton. The Worlands' son Joseph, 6, has enrolled in sports and in the city's sum-

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mer camps.

"It's been huge," Craig Worland said.

OC's Special Spokes invited Julie to be among 12 children to be evaluated or fitted for adaptive tricycles at an Oct. 15 event at Creekside Park in Dana Point. Special Spokes is based in Dana Point, where founder Susan Hoang of Lake Forest has her physical therapy practice.

"I work with kids who can't ride typical bikes," Hoang said. "A few parents asked me what kind of bike can my child ride, and I didn't really know, until I looked into this program called AMBUCS. It's a national nonprofit. AmTrykes is the brand."

OC's Special Spokes, a local chapter of AMBUCS, has assisted 89 riders over the past two years from Orange, Riverside and San Diego counties, Hoang said. AMBUCS makes the tricycles available at reduced cost, and if families can't afford that, Special Spokes does fundraising to try to help with the purchase.

Craig Worland, stationed at Camp Pendleton for the last three years with the 1st Combat Engineer Battalion, said the adap-

tive tricycle will be perfect for Julie. "You can grow with the bike by extending it," he said. "And the supports for balance, you can take those away as she gets stronger."

Taylor Worland said she and Craig sought out Julie for adoption. "We felt like we were interested and capable, and we know that those are the kids that are often not sought after - older kids, sibling groups, special needs. We felt capable."

They have been fostering Julie in recent months, anticipating finalization of adoption Nov. 18, thrilled how the therapeutic AmTryke will help Julie, Taylor said.

Assisting the Worlands with the AmTryke was Don Glasgow, a San Clemente volunteer involved with numerous groups.

"I've been involved with this amazing charity organization for the past year or so," he said. "A friend introduced me to (Susan) almost two years ago."

Glasgow, who helped connect Rotary with Special Spokes, said all five Rotary Club trikes were matched with special-needs riders.

For more information, visit ocspecialspokes.org. To inquire about evaluation for an adaptive tricycle, write to ocspecialspokes@gmail.com.