

Lexus and Cerebral Palsy Foundation Team Up to Create Child's Accessible Ride-on Vehicle

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PLANO, Texas (March 5, 2020) — Lexus and the Cerebral Palsy Foundation (CPF) have joined forces to create a one-of-a-kind ride-on vehicle inspired by children with cerebral palsy. The collaboration combines Lexus' human-centric design philosophy with CPF's mission of improving the lives of people with cerebral palsy and opening up the world of possibilities.

“People with cerebral palsy rarely get the interventions and support they need at the moments they need them,” said Rachel Byrne, CPF executive director. “Our mission is to shift that paradigm and be a catalyst for creating positive change through innovative collaborations and partnerships.”

For children with cerebral palsy, one of the greatest challenges is being able to participate in their environment and play as other children do.

“At Lexus, our core design philosophy has always been human-centric,” said Cooper Ericksen, Lexus group vice president, product planning & strategy. “We create vehicles around the art and science of human needs. In this case, we wanted to push the envelope and explore what that might mean for a child with cerebral palsy who hasn't been able to experience the joy of mobility like other children have.”

The ride-on vehicle was revealed to its recipient, Finley Smallwood, in March – a month also designated as National Cerebral Palsy Awareness Month. Together, Lexus and the Cerebral Palsy Foundation identified specific mobility challenges faced by children with cerebral palsy, and Finley in particular.

Because it can be difficult for Finley to sit for long periods of time, modifications were first made to the seat, adding side padding for lateral support around her waist along with an adjustable headrest and a five-point harness. Her customized ride-on car also includes increased door size and reduced ground clearance to allow for ease of entry and exit.

Many children with cerebral palsy don't have the strength to be able to hold and turn a steering wheel consistently for a given period of time, and mobility challenges can make using a foot pedal impossible. Adding something as simple as an armrest joystick allows Finley the ability to control the direction and acceleration of the vehicle without the need for foot pedals or holding a steering wheel for an extended period of time — giving her the freedom to drive just like any other child.

“Oh, and we painted the body of the car purple,” noted Ericksen. “Because that's Finley's favorite color.”

“While these modifications will impact the life of one special child,” Ericksen added, “it's also a step in opening a door for exploring the vast possibilities of human-centric design.”

The partnership is powered by Givewith. For more information and to watch Finley's journey unfold, visit: <https://givewith.com/lexus-cp>.