

6 Indiana County kids receive custom-made mobility equipment

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Pictured are the kids and their equipment, their families, and the ARIN IU28 team. Submitted photo.

Variety the Children’s Charity partnered again Tuesday with the ARIN Intermediate Unit 28 and Blackburn’s to present four adaptive bikes and two adaptive strollers to local Indiana County kids with disabilities.

The kids not only received their new equipment, but safety was thoroughly reviewed as well as ways to empower families to use the equipment on a regular basis.

At the very end of the presentation, each child was fit into their new equipment (making sure that it met their needs appropriately), and then they took off in a special parade of celebration.

Variety board member and local resident Mickey Sgro attended the presentation yesterday, and he made a passionate plea to the community, saying, “Right now, we need the help of Indiana County to spread the word that Variety’s programs exist, so that even more local kids can receive this life-changing equipment.”

After Tuesday's presentation, Variety has now presented more than 180 adaptive bikes, adaptive strollers or communication devices to local kids in Armstrong and Indiana counties that are served by ARIN IU28 (worth more than \$290,000 in equipment).

Parents regularly share that an adaptive bike or stroller is not only changing their child's life, but receiving the equipment gives families hope for the future.



Jace Juart, 9, from Smicksburg, received his new adaptive bike, and his mom, Tara Juart, said,

“Receiving this adaptive bike means so much to Jace and our whole family! We currently have a small bike with training wheels on it that Jace loves to get on, but he's unable to control it. So, we have to push him around in it.

Getting this special bike means that Jace is finally able to ride a bike with his siblings and feel included!”

Jace Juart smiled ear-to-ear on his new bike with his parents, Tara and Justin Juart, and Variety board member Mickey Sgro. Submitted photo.

Nicholas Stoltzfus, 6, from Blairsville, also received his new adaptive bike.

“We are very excited about this adaptive bike! Nicholas just started wearing his prosthetic leg again because he had to have a reconstructive surgery on the stump, so getting the bike is perfect timing,” said Nicholas' mom, Loretta Stoltzfus.

“We have almost a half mile to our mailbox, and I am really excited about the good exercise this bike will be for both of us! Thank you so much for your part in making our world brighter on this gray day!”

Nicholas Stoltzfus was all smiles on his new bike with his mom, Loretta Stoltzfus, ready to help guide him in the parade. Submitted photo.



The organization really needs the community's help to spread the word that its programs exist, so no eligible child misses out on this life-changing equipment.

Applications are accepted all year long, and families can apply to one, two or all three programs if they are eligible and their child can benefit.

All equipment is provided for free through:

- Variety's My Bike® Program, which provides a Rifton adaptive bike (with a stationary stand and Rifton accessories) to eligible children with disabilities, so they can experience the joy, freedom and belonging that comes from riding a bike
- Variety's My Stroller® Program, which currently provides Convoid EZ Rider adaptive strollers to eligible kids to use for "on-the-go" mobility or general safety/inclusion in the community
- Variety's My Voice® Program, which provides communication devices (i.e., a restricted iPad with a prescribed communication app) to eligible children with a communication disorder to give them a voice and enable them to express their thoughts, feelings, wants and needs 24/7

Interested families can visit www.varietypittsburgh.org/applynow to learn more/apply or call the Variety office directly at (724) 933-0460.