

Laura Litzan

From: Erik Brechnitz <ebrechnitz@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 30, 2019 2:25 PM
To: Laura Litzan
Subject: Fwd: Donation of sports wheelchair

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Please call me about this. I would like to get something on the agenda for a presentation at our June 17 meeting.
Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Michael O,Leary" <michaeloleary79@gmail.com>
Date: May 30, 2019 at 2:18:16 PM EDT
To: ebrechnitz@aol.com
Subject: Donation of sports wheelchair

Hello Erik,

Cindy and I would like to donate a sports wheelchair to the Marco Island Racquet Club. I believe you are already aware of my participation in the 2019 US Open Pickleball Championships. Last year I was the only wheelchair participant in the Open. It has been a goal of mine to reach out to other wheelchair folk and get them involved in this great sport. This year, along with the help of the co founders of The US Open we managed to have six wheelchair participants and two wheelchair divisions. My goal is to continue to raise awareness and grow the wheelchair involvement in pickleball. We are looking at possibly 15 -20 wheelchair athletes at next year's Open?

This year my wife Cindy was commissioned to design and paint the cover of the Official Program for the US Open Pickleball Championships. She created a 36x48" painting which was to become the cover of the program. We had posters made of the painting also. During the week of the Open, while I was busy playing pickleball and winning both Bronze and Gold medals, Cindy along with the help of several friends sold raffle tickets and posters. At the end of the week there was a drawing to win Cindy's original painting as 1st prize, a metal framed poster as 2nd prize and a wood framed poster as 3rd prize. With the sale of raffle tickets and posters we were able to purchase 3 sports wheelchairs. Two of the chairs have been donated to East Naples Community Park, and the other chair is to be donated to Marco Island Racquet Club.

My wish is that the wheelchairs will remain at the parks to be available for loan to anyone that is in a wheelchair that desires to learn how to play pickleball. Many disabled people cannot afford to buy their own sports wheelchair as medical insurance will not pay for them. These chairs cost around \$4,000 per chair, and many disabled people cannot work and their medical expenses are sky high.

Playing pickleball in a wheelchair has been such a positive thing in my life. My goal is to get other disabled people to come to the parks and help teach them this sport that has given so much purpose to me in my life. I am already beginning to teach someone at East Naples in one of the new chairs, and others have been reaching out to me for help. We hopefully will be having the pros at the parks teaching disability clinics soon?

I thought that presenting the donation of the sports wheelchair at the June 17 City Council meeting would be a great opportunity reach out to the people of Marco Island. The more people that know the

wheelchair is available, the more opportunity for disabled folks to hear about it and give it a try.

Thank you Erik for your consideration on this matter,

Michael and Cindy O'Leary

Sent from my iPad