Drive4Life

Your wheels will get them theirs

Nota News

DRIVE TO GIVE: Norm Needham (sixth from left) presenting the "4WD Door" cheque to Georgina Springer of Northcott Society (seventh from left).

Drive 4 Life raises $74,000 for Northcott Society

TEA Gardens resident and local car club member, Norm Needham, was recently involved in organising "Four Wheel Drive For Wheelchairs".

Four wheel drive owners were invited to donate a tax deductible $1,000 per vehicle to The Northcott Society and be escorted by experienced group leaders on a five day, four night tour of the Victorian high country.

The event was run primarily within the Alpine National Park, with the sanction of Parks Victoria.

The participating vehicles were split into eight groups traversing various tracks in and around the Alpine National Park, and camping in different locations each night.

"With sponsorship from ARB 4X4 Accessories, Cooper Tyres, and Overlander Magazine to cover running costs, we were able to raise $74,000 for Northcott Equipment Solutions, and the participants thoroughly enjoyed the experience," said Mr Needham.

"This was the first charity event of our recently formed small organisation, 'Drive 4 Life', and buoyed by the participants bubbling enthusiasm at the final night's barbeque and presentations, we are already planning a similar event for next year," he said.

Northcott, established in 1929 as The NSW Society for Crippled Children, provides assistance, services and support to over 4,000 children and adults with disabilities and to their families.

Northcott Equipment Solutions (NES) boasts one of the most comprehensive mobility facilities in the country.

The wheelchair maintenance service has trained technicians who repair and maintain manual and power-drive wheelchairs, as well as hoists and scooters.

The mobile units are well equipped with tools, spare parts, and repair facilities.

They operate throughout Sydney, Illawarra, Central Coast, and the Hunter areas and visit private homes, hospitals and community centres.

Fairfax Community Newspapers

Driving on for those in need

Drive 4 Life: Fund-raising committee members Eugene and Celia Barry, ARB representative Mark Di Stefano (a major sponsor), committee member David Dennis and Ben Keyte (front) – out to raise $100,000 for Northcott.

DRIVE 4 Life, a non-profit group of four-wheel-drive enthusiasts, has issued a challenge to tour the rugged Victorian high country to raise $100,000 for Northcott Disability Services.

About 70 teams have registered so far for the run from April 23 to 28 but 30 more are needed to ensure the full sum is raised.

Northcott Disability Services is a state-based organisation that supports children and adults with disabilities.

The tour was the brainchild of Drive 4 Life founder Mick Whitehead.

He said he realised the size of the task of supporting someone living with a disability after he met Ben Keyte, the son of Drive 4 Life committee member Debra Dennis.

Ben has arthrogryposis, a condition that is characterised by immobility in one or more joints.

He uses a wheelchair but that does not slow him down.

He participates in Northcott's recreation service, plays sport and has time out from home at Northcott's respite cottage in North Rocks.

Northcott Equipment Solutions has customised Ben's new wheelchair.

"I have always wanted to raise money for wheelchairs," Mr Whitehead said.

"When I learned about Ben's unique situation I realised how hard it is to get assistance and how much Northcott has helped. Because of that, I decided to do this fundraiser."

The committee and all involved in the tour have volunteered their time to raise the money.

The run, approved by Parks Victoria, promises to be well organised and safe with experienced guides leading.

All routes have been thoroughly planned with escape routes for wet weather.

Northcott's equipment loan pool includes a fleet of manual and electric wheelchairs, hoists, walking frames, shower and commode chairs.

To register, please contact Mick Whitehead on 0417 278 105 or email him on drive4life@overlander.com.au

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