



SARTA MedStart
Clair Pomeroy Award Nomination

Brian Watwood and Wijit, Inc.

Brian Watwood, the inventor of the Wijit®, was disabled in an accident in 1987. Prior to his accident he was a triathlete and professional skier. He conceived the Wijit as a solution to his own challenges in using a manual wheelchair, and has dedicated his life to the development of the Wijit to improve the lives of wheelchair users.



The Wijit increases the mobility and independence of wheelchair-dependent people, prevents injury, and enables healthy physical activity improving cardiovascular condition. This improves the quality of the user, and of all those with whom they interact.

The Wijit is the first lever drive wheelchair mechanism that is easy to use, can be installed on the majority of existing wheelchairs in less than an hour, is low cost, and is ready for mass production. The Wijit is patented (issued US and EU patents); FDA registered; approved by Medicare, the VA, and many private insurers for reimbursement; and has approximately 200 users.

The Wijit will be marketed by Wijit, Inc., a newly formed company headquartered in Sacramento that will drive the commercialization of the Wijit as well as development of new products. Pride Industries will manufacture the Wijit in Sacramento.

To see the Wijit in action go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=491qe2pCr2c>

The Wijit changes the lives of its users. You heard Matt Rupel tell you how it changed his life in the video. Matt is not unique; our customers love their Wijit:

Move at the speed of life



"I love my new Wijit. Now I can get around by myself. Before I got the Wijit I could not use my wheelchair very well. Now with the Wijit I can get to my classroom on my own."

Elina, 4th grader, Athetoid Cerebral Palsy

"Prior to putting the Wijit on my wheelchair, I avoided places like the Capitol Mall completely because I do not have sufficient hand strength to propel myself that far. On a recent visit to Washington my wife and I went to two basketball games, we visited museums, strolled the mall, and went to several restaurants that were "walking distance" from our hotel. All self-propelled! None of this would have been possible without the Wijit unless my wife pushed me everywhere."

Ken, Texas

"My doctor said I needed rotator cuff surgery. With my Wijit, my shoulder pain disappeared in a few weeks, and I have gained upper body strength and muscle tone. I can now take my dog for long walks."

Kurt, Retired, Paraplegic

"The Wijit has changed my life. Before I got my Wijit I would get upset when people would look at the girl in the wheelchair, but now I want them to see how easily I get around. The Wijit is saving my shoulders, my heart, and my soul. I will never be able to thank you enough."

Vicki, Paraplegic, Australia

Move at the speed of life

“Before I got my Wijit I needed someone to assist me in getting my wheelchair out of my house, and I could not push it very far. Now I can go out by myself, take my dog for a walk, and go long distances on my own. I am stronger and healthier.”

Thomas

The Wijit will help a large number of people live a more fulfilling life. There are over 3,000,000 wheelchairs users in the US, and an additional 7,000,000 users in other developed countries. Estimates of the worldwide need for wheelchairs exceed 30,000,000 people. We believe the Wijit would be beneficial to at least 2/3 of these people.

The Wijit is a simple product that healthcare providers can offer to their patients that will dramatically improve their quality of life while simultaneously reducing the cost of healthcare. Wheelchair users have a high incidence of broken fingers and repetitive stress injuries to their wrists and shoulders caused by the use of a wheelchair. Clinical studies demonstrate that the Wijit significantly reduces the stress induced on the arm, which should result in a significant reduction in pain and in the number of surgeries required. The Wijit also helps the user get exercise, improving their cardiovascular condition.

The Wijit offers the user significantly improved mobility, improving the quality of life of the user and all of the people that they interact with.

The Wijit is simply a better manual wheelchair!

Submitted by Harry Laslow, April 3, 2011