

MAKING LIFE BETTER

Agency: Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare

Program: Mobile Outreach Clinic

Services include: Specialty medical and assistive technology services, including:

- Evaluation, mold, fit or modification of:
 - braces for feet, hands, head or trunk
 - seating systems in wheelchairs
 - mounting systems for communication devices
 - other adaptive equipment
- Consultation, programming or training with:
 - state-of-the-art speech generating devices
 - alternative access to computers
 - power wheelchairs
 - electronic aids to daily living

Impact: Every year, more than 140 individuals come to Mankato to receive over 250 services during 12 two- to three-day clinics. As a result, families are able to take family vacations instead of spending paid time off for medical-related appointments, and saving the cost of gas and mileage for trips to the Twin Cities. Meanwhile, local professionals and caregivers gain knowledge and skills about assistive technology, its use and maintenance, are better able to provide ongoing care; and are able to continue the process of obtaining and using assistive technology devices.

Every month, Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare brings specialty medical and assistive technology services to Mankato for people of all ages with disabilities.

Bill*, an adult with a spinal cord injury, had intractable pain, forcing him to stay in bed for a very extended time. When he came to the outreach clinic in Mankato, it had been over a year since he had been able to sit up in his wheelchair for more than two hours at a time. A seat specialist at Gillette's outreach clinic was able to make him a custom seating system that was effective in reducing his pain, so that he can now sit upright for over eight hours. The ability to sit upright has made Bill more functional, allowed him to decrease medications, and allowed him the freedom to move, both while in his home and while out & about.

Bill's life is more comfortable and enjoyable in his wheelchair than it was in his bed. Bill recently wrote a note of thank you to Gillette, saying, "I never thought four years ago I'd ever travel again, [due to] pain and spasm problems. Thanks to your help with the cushion, I do have a life again and I'm ready to travel again."

Bill is an example of just one of the individuals whose life has been improved because of Gillette's services. In fact, 100% of families and patients surveyed by Gillette responded that the person with a disability who received the service had increased comfort, function, safety, or improved health.

Your support of United Way makes it possible to bring these incredible services right here to our community.



The outreach clinic's current schedule can be found at www.gillettechildrens.org/outreachcalendar; appointments can be made by calling 800-578-4266.

United Way's funding helps make it possible to bring the Mobile Outreach Clinic to Mankato, decreasing costly travel to the Twin Cities, and resulting in better continuum of care and less stress for families and their loved one with a disability.

* Name has been changed.