The Children’s Rehabilitation Foundation (CRF) is a local Manitoba charity, focused on helping children living with disabilities and special needs. CRF is a vital, integral part of the Manitoba “children’s disability” landscape, offering important services and purchasing equipment for those families most in need.

CRF exists because children with disabilities and special needs should have the same opportunities as other children to learn, play and grow. CRF purchases specialized equipment and provides operating funds for adapted recreation programs that are not funded by any other source. Equipment and programs funded by the CRF include:

- Mobility equipment like lightweight wheelchairs and specialty walkers
- Speaking and communication devices, such as iPads
- Educational technology equipment, such as laptops and specialty software
- Specialized recreation equipment, such as modified bicycles, swim equipment and sporting devices
- Home health equipment such as commodes and shower chairs
- Adapted recreation programs, such as Cooking Clubs, Art & Jam, Gardening Therapy, Music Therapy, Summer Day Camps and Saturday Night For Teens program.

The Foundation is the only non-profit organization in Manitoba which covers the entire cost of individual pieces of specialized equipment for children living with disabilities and special needs. There are other organizations in Manitoba who perform similar services (i.e. partially funding equipment purchases), however, the Foundation is the only one of its kind in this province.

Between 2013 and 2011, the Foundation purchased specialized equipment for 281 children. This is only the tip of the iceberg- we need the help of the community to make sure all children can receive the equipment they need.

We wholeheartedly believe in family-centred care and the importance of community. We know that by helping a child with a disability or special need, the whole family is lifted up and can thrive. One piece of equipment can mean the difference between happiness and sadness for a family and can ease their struggles on a daily basis. We work hard to build a community of families, who can rely and depend on one another for advice and support, when it feels like there is no where else to turn.

We are only as strong as our donors and volunteers. The Foundation is forever in debt and grateful to the community groups, businesses and individuals who support our mission. We are 100% funded through our special events, grants and donations received, and completely dependent on the community to help us continue making a difference in children’s lives. Your donation to CRF is helping build stronger, happier lives for Manitoba’s families and is an important ingredient in their success.
Children living with disabilities and special needs are just like other children — they yearn to be with friends, have fun and be included in all aspects of life. Even though they are unable to communicate how they feel, their body language and attitudes tell us they have the same wants and needs as children their age, such as going to baseball games, seeing their favorite music star in concert, riding a bike, enjoying a picnic in the park, playing with friends at recess, and sharing their story and experiences with the world. Even though they have challenges, they have a story to share with everyone that is just as important as yours and mine.

However, their physical and cognitive challenges exclude these children from activities and leave them on the sidelines to watch friends and family have fun. Their disabilities preclude them from taking part in valuable childhood experiences. Without some kind of assistance or equipment to make them independent, they are unable to be like everyone else. They are not only disabled — they are disengaged from the world. Their disability (and inability to do the smallest independent tasks) adversely affects their quality of life and diminishes their independence. This hardship eventually takes a toll on themselves, on their confidence and self-esteem, and on their family's life. In serious cases, a disability can lead to isolation, depression and deteriorating health. These families are living in a world of constant fatigue, feeling isolated and housebound.

That’s why we need your help.

These children need specialized equipment to help them with their daily activities. Having the right specialized equipment — whether it’s a wheelchair, a modified bike or a special bed — makes all the difference in the world. With the right equipment, these children can be something extra special — a child; and a whole new world of possibilities opens up for them. They become active participants in their lives — enjoying all the special moments with family and friends that childhood offers.

Children living with disabilities and special needs are equal to other children. They deserve the same opportunities to learn, play and grow. The Children’s Rehabilitation Foundation strives everyday to provide these opportunities by purchasing integral equipment to help them become as independent as possible.

Brigitte Lagasse, mother of eight-year-old Kyden who received a wheelchair from the Foundation explained it best. She said, “it’s not just about the equipment; it’s about the life experience the equipment provides. The equipment changes lives.”