

Disability Campaign.org

Natalie's Story: Helping a friend with a disability



Seven-year-old Natalie decided to forgo gifts at her 7th birthday in order to raise money for children all around the world who need wheelchairs. And this little girl raised \$750. What inspired Natalie? Well, she had just lost a friend who used a wheelchair and it made her think of all the other kids with disabilities in the world who really need wheelchairs. So Natalie went on-line, read about the Wheels for the World outreach of Joni and Friends, and decided to participate. How might you help your friend affected by a disability?

Ways that you can help your disabled friend:

1. **Do a simple act of service.** Imagine being in the shoes of your friend. Pause for one minute and think of one unexpected act of service that she'd appreciate. It could be mowing the lawn, washing the dishes, or even babysitting for an evening.
2. **Ask for his help.** Every person, including your friend, desires for his abilities to be acknowledged and needed. Remember that he has talents, skills, and abilities that are unhindered by his disability. Ask him to help with chores, serving on committees, speaking, singing, or whatever is appropriate to his interests.
3. **Ask her what you can do to help her.** Many individuals with a disability fear that they will be a burden to their friends and family. Let her know that you understand



that it is a difficult thing to accept help, and communicate to her that it is a joy for you to serve her.

4. **If your friend is in a rehabilitation center, visit him.** Your visit will refresh your friend. If you don't know anyone currently in a rehabilitation center, consider volunteering at a center near you.

5. **Offer transportation on a regular basis.** If your friend is in a wheelchair and could use help getting around town, consider offering your help on a consistent basis. Be someone who she can count on.



6. **Surprise your friend.** Life brings forth many surprises; to some, that may entail a disability, but not all surprises in life should be unpleasant. Think about how you can surprise your friend with something that will make him smile. If he likes sports, place a pair of baseball tickets in his mailbox, or if he is an avid reader, surprise him with a gift card to a local bookstore. Just remember to take into account his interests and health.

7. **Do something on behalf of a charity or organization that serves people with disabilities.** You could walk a marathon to raise disability awareness. If there is a local office of an organization that has offered services to your friend, contact them to find ways in which you can serve alongside them. When you help others like your friend, you'll make her feel honored and appreciated.



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