



# Happy wheels

**MEET JACOB VAN GENT – JUST ONE OF THE CHILDREN WHOSE LIVES YOU HAVE CHANGED THROUGH FREEDOM WHEELS®.**

The money you have raised for the FREEDOM WHEELS program has made a difference to the lives of many Australian children. Six-year-old Jacob Van Gent is just one of those children. Jacob has Multicystic Leukoencephalopathy and developmental delay, which means that although he is mentally alert, he has poor motor skills and has not yet begun to walk or speak.

“But he can spot a McDonalds sign from the car, with or without his glasses,” says his father, Jacob senior.

The Van Gent family found out about the Technical Aid to the Disabled (TAD) – the service provider of the FREEDOM WHEELS program – from the Spastic Centre, where Jacob receives treatment. TAD designed a whole range of aids to help the Van Gent family before designing a bicycle for Jacob.

The bike was selected by the Van Gent family on advice from TADNSW staff, and then modified by volunteers Andrew Manning and Jim Lemon. The modifications included large footcups, an eight inch seat, a fixed rear wheel, stabiliser wheels, a high riser bar, a pelvic belt, trunk stabiliser fins with mesh straps, and a tow handle mounted to the front handlebar.

Jacob almost didn’t get the bike as a problem was detected at his assessment: he was persistently extending his feet forward in line with his lower leg when trying to push down on the pedals, and TADNSW staff were concerned that his ankles might be damaged. However this was solved with a newly-designed brace fixed

beneath the pedal-mounted footcups, which wraps onto his calf and holds his foot in the correct position.

Jacob clearly loves the bike, although he is still working on the concepts of steering and pedalling. “We take him out and we’re exhausted after an hour, but he’s still going,” Jacob senior said. His mother Jody adds that it will be very good for his muscle development and fitness, as it’s the only kind of exercise he gets.

You can help more children like Jacob by donating money or becoming a sponsor of FREEDOM WHEELS. So far, IBOs around Australia have come up with creative and fun ways of raising money, including fun runs, parties and chocolate drives. A number of IBOs have also helped by purchasing FREEDOM WHEELS merchandise. As our business is founded on the principles of freedom, family, hope and reward, it is our responsibility to give back to the community and help these children one by one.

For information on how you can get involved, visit the Amway website and click on the ‘Freedom Wheels’ link or contact Amway directly on 1800 45 46 47 to speak to Deborah Campbell or Nadia Zeaiter. You can also email [freedomwheels@amway.com](mailto:freedomwheels@amway.com).

Together we change more lives.. one by one.

