

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Hamsters USA raises \$385,600 for special kids at LifeScape in Rapid City, South Dakota

Rapid City, SD – The international motorcycle group Hamsters USA has been helping kids thrive in the Black Hills for over 20 years. Their annual fundraiser for LifeScape’s Rapid City clinic was held last night in Spearfish, raising an amazing \$385,600! All the funds stay local, helping over 1,600 children in West River South Dakota get the physical, occupational, speech, and behavior therapies they need to grow strong and thrive.

“The 1,600 children, their families, and the staff of LifeScape are incredibly grateful to the Hamsters USA and their friends for their generous support. Children across the Black Hills region have access to the best therapies and education services for diagnosis such as Autism, spina bifida, cerebral palsy, rare genetic disorders, developmental delays, and recovery from accidents and major surgeries because the Hamsters USA care,” says LifeScape Foundation President Jessica Wells. “Without their support, children would not have the consistent physical, occupational, speech, and behavior care services they need to learn and grow.”

The fundraiser was part of the Hamsters USA annual meeting during Rally Week. Governor Larry Rhoden helped welcome the group to South Dakota again this year. Four-year-old Kaiya also greeted Hamsters with a big smile and stickers for their shirts. Born with a hole in her heart and only one pulmonary artery, Kaiya was airlifted from Rapid City during an April blizzard to have her first open heart surgery at just six days old. She had a second surgery when she was five months old to open her arteries and replace the tiny valve as her heart grew. She was later also diagnosed with DiGeorge syndrome which is marked by developmental delays. Kaiya loves her therapists and coming to LifeScape for physical and occupational therapy. She is working hard on increasing her balance, navigating stairs, jumping, and even rode a bike with pedals for the first time this week!

While Kaiya is known for being the first person to greet everyone in the waiting room and hallways of LifeScape’s Rapid City clinic, she also used her charm at last night’s event when she got on stage and sang “This Little Light of Mine” to the crowd, nearly bringing everyone to tears.

LifeScape’s Rapid City clinic served 1,600 children last year. Clinicians also drove more than 10,000 miles every month to deliver needed outreach therapies to kids in their own communities, whether that be in their home, school, and daycare. This allows children living in rural areas of western South Dakota the opportunities to still receive developmental help without their parents having to take time off work to drive them.

LifeScape's mission is to empower children with disabilities to live their best lives. With the help of Hamsters USA, West River kids are growing strong and thriving.



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About LifeScape

LifeScape of Rapid City, SD, is a satellite location for the LifeScape organization based in Sioux Falls. It is a private, independent, nonprofit organization with a mission to empower children and adults with disabilities to lead fulfilling lives. LifeScape holds the longest continuous CQL (Council on Quality Leadership) accreditation of any agency of its type in the world. It is the only private Intermediate Care Facility in SD and the only state agency to serve children and adults with disabilities across their lifespan. LifeScape supports people in sixty-five counties in SD and several surrounding states. It served approximately 5,600 children and adults last year.