

# New E-bike, Swing Make Life a Little Sweeter for Olivia Chambers, 9

**By Ryan Schlehuber**

All it takes is to look into her eyes to see the enjoyment nine-year-old Olivia Chambers gets from the new technology her family, the school, and the community has provided her for this school year.

Born with a neuro-muscular disorder, Olivia has limited movement and is unable to talk, although she has use of her arms, hands, and head and she is aware of her surroundings. Now, with the help of a new electric-assisted cycle and a specially-designed swing, she is able to enjoy more of what her classmates enjoy.

Olivia's parents, Jody and Mark, have three other daughters, Emma, Maggie, and Clara, and Clara, now two years old, also enjoys the new mode of transportation and two sons, Richard and Robert.

Students flocked to the school on their bicycles for the first day of the school year Tuesday morning, September 5, as did Olivia and her mother, in a new German-made electric-assist cycle called a Duet, which has a

**At right: Olivia Chambers, during the the first day of school Tuesday, September 5, enjoys a new, specially-designed swing that supports her body and head better than a traditional swing.**

front seat for Olivia. The two-person seat is detachable and can be used as a stroller.

"It really gives her more independence because we can bring her anywhere we want now without having to have another person on a bicycle toting her wheelchair," said Mrs. Chamber. "We were able to take her into the store the other day. It's been a long time since Olivia has been in a store."

Mrs. Chambers said the Duet cycle allows her daughter to get "a real bike experience."

"Because she is in the front," Olivia's mother said, "it allows her to ride with other kids and not have to be in the back of a bicycle where she cannot see things as well."

During her first day back at school, Olivia also enjoyed



Olivia has been overwhelming, said Mrs. Chambers. Both the swing and the bicycle were partially funded by the Mackinac Island Community Foundation.

The seven-gear bicycle, which cost \$10,288, was also funded through state-supported programs for disabled children.

"It took a couple of years to raise the money, but we're all happy with it," said Mrs. Chambers. "Now, whenever me, Mark, or my other kids want to go for a ride, we can take Olivia along" without having to depend on someone else. "It's made her life and ours much easier and more enjoyable."

Medical experts, said Mrs. Chambers, have yet to define her daughter's disorder, or figure out how to prevent it from progressing. Olivia has been taken to experts in Ann Arbor, Cleveland, and Mayo Clinic.

Despite her disorder, Olivia continues to submerge herself into everyday student affairs, with the help of her school aides, Mrs. McClintock, in her second year, and first-year aide Julie Fisher.

"She's not as limited anymore," said Mrs. McClintock. "She is starting now to help out in the kitchen area, bringing the salt and pepper shakers to the tables. She's also helping to hand out announcements to the students."

ing or in the bike," said Mrs. McClintock. "It gives her more options for leisure time. It also exposes the technology used to aid disabled people to the rest of the students, making them more aware of what's out there."

Community support for

swinging on a new swing, which is designed to support her head and her body. Mrs. Chambers said foot pads and cushions will probably be added to the swing soon, for a more comfortable experience.

"She just got back her power wheelchair and when she saw the blue swing, she went right to it," said Mrs. Chambers.

Both the swing and the electric cycle give Miss Chambers more independence, said Andrea McClintock, the school's special education teacher.

"It is a great feeling to see her face just glow when she's swing-



**At right: A new seven-speed electric-assist cycle, called a Duet, allows Jody Chambers to bring her nine-year-old daughter, Olivia, who suffers from a neuro-muscular disorder, on bicycle rides with her other daughter, two-year-old Clara. The specially-designed cycle is detachable and the two-seat basket can be used as a stroller.**

## From the Chef...

### Bruschetta Mix Makes Great Outdoor Appetizer



**Chef Derek Downing displays Chippewa Hotel Waterfront's most popular cold appetizer - a serving of bruschetta mix.**

A serving of bruschetta mix from Chippewa Hotel Waterfront enhances dining experience at the hotel, which offers an outdoor patio view of the Island's Haldimand Bay for patrons, said Chef Derek Downing.

The meal is excellent for an appetizer before lunch or dinner and, for some, makes a light meal in itself.

"It's our most popular cold appetizer," said Mr. Downing, 27, originally from Mackinaw City. "It's a great starter before a meal because it cleanses the palate with the tomato and sauces like vinegar that's in it."

#### Ingredients

- 12 diced Roma tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons of minced garlic
- 2 tablespoons of fresh basil
- 1 cup of minced kalamata olive
- 1 tablespoon of kosher salt
- 1 tablespoon of balsamic vinegar
- 1 tablespoon of olive oil
- 1 cup of minced red onion

#### Preparation

Combine all the ingredients and mix it up by hand. The mix is best served with grilled ciabatta bread that is available at most stores. Garnish it with fresh shredded parmesan cheese.

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