



Fountain City family hoping for service dog

WATE 6 On Your Side staff

Published: April 13, 2017, 5:02 pm | Updated: April 13, 2017, 6:32 pm



Payson (Family)

KNOXVILLE (WATE) – A Fountain City family is doing all they can to give their little boy some independence, that freedom would be in part because of a service dog.

Christie Rouse's youngest son, Payson, was born with a rare genetic disorder called Cornelia de Lange syndrome (CdLS). The six-year-old was recently approved for his very own service dog. The only problem is that the service dog costs between \$13,000 to \$15,000.

"Right now there's no way that we can afford that on our own," said Rouse.

Rouse is hoping the community can step in and help so Payson can keep accomplishing goals. She believes a service dog will give her son independence.

Payson is playful curious and quick to giggle, but Rouse says raising him comes with obstacles. The disorder causes some developmental delays and requires a feeding tube, among other things.

"He likes doing anything his brothers can do," said Rouse. "He has autonomic dysfunction and that affects his nervous system where he doesn't sweat."

Because of that, Payson is often watched closely so his health doesn't take a turn.

"That really limits his independence. It's necessary because we have to keep him safe and that's our priority but it's a temporary band-aid," added Rouse. "If he climbs out of his bed and tries to take a bath in the middle of the night while everybody's sleeping, which he's done before, the dog will be able to alert us."

The Rouses are hoping to get Payson matched with a service dog because there are openings in May and June with the organization they're looking at. If everything works out, Payson will have a service dog by Christmas.

They're also hoping the service dog will be a comfort to Payson so that when he's at school, doctor's appointments, or feeling anxious he can know everything is okay.

"He has a lot of potential. He's already exceeded all the doctor's expectations. They said he would never walk, talk, or eat real food," added Rouse.

[The Rouse family has set up a YouCaring account for those that would like to help get Payson a service dog. \(https://www.youcaring.com/christierouse-799715\)](https://www.youcaring.com/christierouse-799715)