

The Palm Beach Post

BOYNTON BEACH

Challenged 10-year-old thrilled with her Camaro wheelchair

Emma Pietrafesa will lead Boynton's Barrier Free event.

By Alexandra Seltzer Palm Beach Post Staff Writer



Emma Pietrafesa, a 10-year-old girl who has Cornelia de Lange Syndrome, was presented, along with her brother Anthony, 12, and her mother Karen, with a 2010 Camaro wheelchair/stroller on Friday. MICHAEL ARES / THE PALM BEACH POST

BOYNTON BEACH — Emma Pietrafesa couldn't tell everyone how happy she was — a developmental disorder stops her from being able to speak — but the 10-year-old found a

way to show her emotions Friday after the unveiling of her purple magic wheelchair and stroller designed like her late father's favorite car.

The 10-year-old rapidly moved her left pointer back and forth to the crowd and gave out a yelp.

Slack: Where Work Happens - Sign Up for Free

Messaging, calls, 700+ integrations, search, mobile and desktop apps, & more.

slack.com



"I think she likes it," Emma's mother, Karen Pietrafesa, said, after wiping tears from her face.

In the 2010 Camaro wheelchair, Emma will lead Boynton Beach's annual Barrier Free 5K Run, Walk & Roll on Saturday. Boynton's project manager, Kevin Ramsey, and city police officer Wilmer Rodriguez created the wheelchair to look like Emma's father's favorite car, a 2010 Camaro. Paul Pietrafesa, 48, died in November from pancreatic cancer. He worked for the Coral Springs Fire Department for 11 years.

"She knows he's not around, but she looks for him," Karen Pietrafesa previously said. "She doesn't have the concept of death."

On the side of the car, Ramsey and Rodriguez wrote "Daddy loves you," and the license plate reads "Emma."

The race at Congress Avenue Barrier Free Park benefits the park, which is designed with the needs of disabled children and adults in mind, such as Emma. Emma was born with Cornelia de Lange Syndrome, also known as CdLS.

Lori Wilkinson, who taught Emma for eight years at Royal Palm School, suggested the young girl be the race's honorary starter.

In addition to raising awareness about Boynton's park, Wilkinson said the event gives the Pietrafesa family a chance to raise awareness about pancreatic cancer and Emma's disorder.

"We felt this was a family that could really use a little magic in their life," said Wally Majors, the city's director of parks and recreation.

For information and to register for the race, visit RAPB.COM/5K aseltzer@pbpost.com

SEE THE VIDEO

See Emma get her new wheelchair at <http://pbpo.st/2keRLhA>.

Copyright © 2016, Palm Beach Post, All rights reserved.

See this article in the e-Edition [Here](#)