

Business Students Develop Device to Assist People with Cerebral Palsy

by Bend Weekly News Sources

Two Oregon State University College of Business students have launched a business to market a product that assists adults and children with cerebral palsy. Jeremy Trebelhorn, a junior specializing in Management Information Systems, designed the support device called the Spencer SkyArm. Tyler Gerding, a sophomore specializing in Entrepreneurship, manages the business aspects of their venture, called 26th Street Technologies.

The two presented their business and the SkyArm model to the honors section of the Introduction to Entrepreneurship class taught by OSU Professor Justin Craig. The class took on the challenge and developed a feasibility plan to assist the pair in advancing their entrepreneurial venture.

The Spencer SkyArm was developed by an Oregon State University student to assist people with cerebral palsy. The support device was named after the boy it was developed for, Spencer Mosley. "The arm will not only help people with cerebral palsy but also build support for the entrepreneurship program at OSU," Gerding said.

The device was named Spencer in memory of its first customer, Spencer Mosley. Mosley was a 13-year-old boy Trebelhorn met while he was a student at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Trebelhorn designed and developed the SkyArm for Mosley before coming to OSU, where he met Gerding and decided to pursue taking the SkyArm to market. Mosley's death this past summer increased the duo's motivation to push the device to market.

Spencer SkyArm is a sling device that assists movement of the user's arm. Cerebral palsy targets the part of the brain that controls movement, decreasing and sometimes even completely restricting mobility. The Spencer SkyArm improves the user's ability to communicate. The design allows lateral arm movement by supporting the weight of a person's arm and easing the effects of gravity. The Spencer SkyArm attaches easily to a wheelchair, requiring no external power source for operation.

The students are working on attaining venture capital to produce the first few Spencer SkyArms which they plan to distribute to a focus group on the OSU campus. The goal is to have 10 Spencer SkyArm units completed in the first quarter of 2007.

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