

OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois has a new fleet of souped-up Radio Flyer wagons, thanks to the ingenuity of a Eureka family, and the generosity of the Radio Flyer company.

First time parents Logan and Kara Ruder of Eureka welcomed twins into the world in 2014. The twins – Beau and Brooklyn – were born at 28 weeks.

After two months in the NICU, Brooklyn was big enough to go home. For Beau, it was a different story. He was diagnosed with chronic lung disease and tetralogy of Fallot, a combination of four heart defects that restricts blood flow to the rest of the body.

Beau spent seven months at Children's Hospital. He underwent two heart-related surgeries, including an open-heart surgery.

"Beau was among the sickest children that Children's Hospital had at the time," Kara said. "He would be OK one day, and then the doctors would need to resuscitate him the next."

In February 2015, Beau was finally ready to join his sister at home. But he still needed around-the-clock oxygen support. He also required follow-up care from seven different doctors, which meant appointments almost daily, lugging a lot of equipment along for the ride, including an oxygen tank, a backup tank, suction machine, feeding pump and a diaper bag.

SOT

Logan Ruder, Beau's Father

"We had his car seat in the front and all of his equipment stuff in the back, and just piled it in, because it was all we could do, and it never failed, everything that you needed was always at the bottom of the stroller. So especially as he got bigger, and it didn't fit in his car seat anymore. We had to find something different."

When the twins received a Radio Flyer wagon for their birthday, Logan had an idea.

SOT

Logan Ruder, Beau's Father

"I just got thinking there's got to be a way I can mount this somewhere else. Then we can hang everything off of that and give him room in the wagon where we can fit both the kids, and so that's kind of what started the idea."

Logan began trying to create something that would work. In a few hours, he'd created an attachment for Beau's tanks, making their lives easier and Beau's life more care-free.

SOT

Logan Ruder, Beau's Father

"I think it's kind of cute, because it's not a sick kid in a special designed wheelchair. It's a little boy with a wagon. They called it the rocket boosters because there's two bottles in the back and it kind of looks like rockets, so we call it the rocket booster wagon."

When the Ruders realized their design could be of use to other kids in the same situation, they decided to buy another wagon and make an attachment to donate to Children's Hospital. When Radio Flyer got word of the project, the company stepped in and donated five wagons to the cause.

SOT

Logan Ruder, Beau's Father

"I sent them pictures of Beau in it at the Caterpillar museum, and different places we'd been with it, and they were like, 'oh that's awesome. How many do you want?' I said, 'Let's start with five and see where it goes. Then five wagons showed up and here we are.'"

To save time, Logan enlisted the help of a friend, who works at fabrication shop in Eureka, to make the attachments.

Logan says this is just the beginning, and as for the future of this project,

SOT

Logan Ruder, Beau's Father (SOT – LOGAN)

"It's hard to say. Whatever people need. If there's anything we can do to accommodate more kids, that's what we are into – just making everybody's life easier and trying to be a blessing."