

# Free medical supplies saving lives in Hampton Roads

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VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. - Sandra and Herman Cruz's world was turned upside down in 2009.

Herman suffered a stroke, and he lost the majority of his strength throughout the left side of his body.

His wife, Sandra, said over the years a lift chair has become a vital part of their daily tasks.

"A lift chair allows a person with that kind of weakness to be pushed forward up enough in a safe way to get out of the chair," Sandra said.

However, when the chair broke, she said all she heard was excuses as to why no one would help fix it.



Sandra and Herman Cruz

"It's too expensive; it's not worth all the time it would take to go into it. It's hard to find people who know what they're doing," Cruz said.

She said she ran into trouble when she couldn't find anyone to fix the broken motor. The couple completed mounds of paperwork, but they didn't qualify for a new chair and they couldn't afford to buy one on their own.

As her husband's sole caretaker, she knew she needed help.

That's when she was connected with [Access Partnership](#). It's a local nonprofit that gives away free medical supplies that have been donated by the community.

From CPAP machines to diabetic test strips and band aids, anyone can benefit.

"We try to simplify it because when you don't have a lot of money, you don't have a lot of time," said Program Coordinator Karen Youmans.

While Youmans couldn't promise the Cruzes a chair, she hit the ground running to find one.

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"So I said, 'Okay, you do what you do and I'll do what I do and pray,'" Cruz said.

Fast forward three months, and Youmans connected the couple with a new chair for free.

Sandra got the call on Monday, and her son was able to pick it up and bring it to their home on Tuesday morning.

Now Herman has more years at home with Sandra - and they didn't have to pay a dime.

"I just stood there and cried because it was a good thing. It was a good thing," Cruz said.

It's those types of reactions that Youman said keeps the group going. She said knowing they are able to make a difference in hundreds of lives makes all the stress worth it.

Anyone can benefit from the supplies, but for certain medical equipment you may need a prescription from a doctor confirming your illness or disability.

You will have to make an appointment before picking up supplies. If you are granted larger supplies like a hospital bed or wheelchair, you will be responsible for transport and set up.

Access Partnership also has countless community partnerships. If they can't help you, they will connect you with someone who can. They also help folks get dental, vision and mental health services.

[Click here](#) to learn more about Access Partnership.

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