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Enabling, Inc. featured in FAAST Access magazine article on innovative assistive devices.

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## FAAST Access Magazine: Hey, BUB, Can You Give Me A Lift?



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Hey, BUB, Can You Give Me A Lift?

**by Lytha Page Belrose, Editor**

"Finally!" exclaimed Thom DeLilla, a C7 quadriplegic and the inventor of the patent-pending Bottoms Up Bar® (BUB®), a wheelchair-to-ground transfer system. "I can get back into my wheelchair, or down onto the floor from it, on my own without having to ask someone for assistance."

"I only wish I had thought of this invention 30 years ago when I was first injured," said DeLilla. "If you can lift yourself enough for a pressure release, you can use this product."

Everyone who uses a wheelchair understands the physical and mental challenges associated with getting up from the floor into the chair and vice versa without someone there to assist in the transfer. This invention makes it possible for a wheelchair user to independently move down to the floor from the chair or up into the chair from the floor, without needing to ask for a lift.



**The BUB® system is easily attached by the user to the wheelchair.**

With the prototype in hand, DeLilla has been asking folks in wheelchairs to try it out. "Each time someone new tries it out," said DeLilla, "there is an overwhelming sense of accomplishment. Each individual is overjoyed with the ability to achieve a task which never before seemed possible."

The name of the invention was dubbed by the late Ricardo Oliver, a C7/C8 quadriplegic, who was one of the first to try out the prototype. In November 2002, he wrote, "I am a fairly active person and often get out of my wheelchair for exercising and recreational activities such as swimming and SCUBA diving. The BUB system provides me with the confidence that I need to view difficult transfers...removing negative mental barriers."

The BUB system is easily attached by the user to the wheelchair. Once attached, it actually stabilizes the chair so the user need not fear tipping out of the chair. Whether it is getting to the ground to get some exercise, play with the kids, picnic in the park, dig in the garden, stare up at the clouds, get into and out of a swimming pool, or to retrieve something you've dropped, the BUB system makes it easy and safe. The product is a lightweight extension apparatus that attaches to the user's wheelchair.

Another BUB system trial user, Brian Sterner, a C6/C7 quadriplegic, wrote, "Being an active [wheelchair] user with a fairly high level of spinal cord injury



**Art Clawson, President of Enabling, Inc. lifting his legs onto the velcro seat.**



**Doug Miller sitting on the velcro seat with the front of BUB® bracing his feet from sliding forward.**



**Mike Bauer is ready to use BUB® to leverage himself onto the ground to do his daily work-out.**

means that performing various transfers is nothing less than an art form...why would anyone want to transfer from the floor to the chair in the first place?...because I view my chair as only something I use, not something I am confined to; the ground or floor is not a place I avoid."

Sterner also wrote, "Furthermore, the ground can serve as a valuable therapeutic area. For instance, stretching can be performed much more easily on a firm floor than a bed or in your chair. Also, while the Americans with Disabilities Act requires that public and private pools have accessible decks, there is not a requirement that people be allowed to access the pool itself. Hence, to access the pool independently, a chair-to-ground and ground-to-chair transfer is needed. I can make these transfers now but it takes me 15 minutes and is quite tiring. With the Bottoms Up Bar, this transfer takes one minute...getting on the ground is no longer something [that I have to] weigh the time and energy I will expend. I just do it." Shown in this series of photos, DeLilla demonstrates how to go from chair to floor and back again.

According to Larry Upright, a 25-year old spinal cord injury survivor, "I can remember like it was yesterday my first trip in my wheelchair. As I wheeled out of the front door of my house, I neglected to remember that 6-inch step into and out of the house. You can't even imagine the embarrassment I felt sitting on the ground wondering how I would ever get back into my wheelchair. In the past, I have spent hours on the floor waiting for someone

to help me back into my chair - or I have injured myself struggling to climb back up on my own. The Bottoms Up Bar could have diffused these situations; it should be a basic piece of equipment for anyone with a spinal cord injury."

For more information about the BUB system, contact:

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**Everyone who uses a wheelchair understands the physical and mental challenges associated with getting up from the floor into the chair and vice versa without someone there to assist in the transfer.**

*My name is Amelia Nyberg. When I was 15, I sustained a T12 spinal cord injury as a result of corrective spinal surgery. As soon as I was able, I started physical therapy to improve my independence with daily activities. The therapist was able to teach me how to dress and perform all of my daily activities, except getting in and out of my chair from the floor.*

*Getting to the floor by myself was very important because I enjoy swimming and lying on the floor to watch TV.*

*Because of the nature of my surgery, I have no flexibility in my back, making it impossible to use the standard method of getting off the floor by myself. I resigned myself to the idea that I would always need a lot of help to get up and down from the floor.*

*Then I met Thom at a scuba class. He told about this invention of his that would enable me to get off the floor without help from two other people and without the use of a lift. I was skeptical.*

*On my first attempt to use the Bottoms Up Bar, I was able to get off the floor myself! The ingenious, compact design makes it portable and easy to use.*

*Thanks, Thom, for giving me what the physical therapist could not. "Bottoms Up" is the step toward independence that I needed.*



**Amelia Nyberg, T12 spinal cord injury enjoys lying on the floor to watch T.V..**



**The BUB® system is easily attached by the user to the wheelchair.**