



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **MEDIA ALERT**

### Variety St. Louis to Gift TWO Adaptive Vans to Local Families in Need

*Variety Teens DeMarko and Maddison will each receive a van that will make it possible for them to travel safely and easily using their power wheelchairs, providing independence and freedom.*

**WHAT:** Variety St. Louis will present two adaptive vans – accessible via wheelchair – to Variety Teens DeMarko and Maddison, area teens living with disability, and their families.

**WHEN:** 3 p.m. on Tuesday, September 28, 2021

**WHERE:** Outside the Variety St. Louis office – 11840 Westline Ind. Dr., St. Louis, MO, 63146

**WHO:** DeMarko and Maddison’s families will be present for interviews, as well as Variety’s Executive Director Brian Roy

**DETAILS:** DeMarko (19 years old) has limited mobility and uses a wheelchair to access his world. It is difficult to load him into the family’s current van, often taking up to an hour to get him situated even for just a short ride. It is also currently impossible for him to use his power wheelchair, which provides him with increased independence, outside his home.

Maddison (17 years old) has several complex medical diagnoses affecting her mobility. She uses a power wheelchair but must be transferred into the front seat of her family’s SUV to go anywhere. This is a long process, and it also requires Maddison to be disconnected from her feeding pump, leaving her without nutrition for periods of time. Sitting in the front seat is also extremely unsafe for Maddison, but it is the family’s only option.

The new adaptive vans will allow DeMarko and Maddison to be transported in their power wheelchairs, making it much easier, safer, and more comfortable for them to travel to critical doctor’s visits, fun social outings, and more, giving their families unprecedented freedom. This is in line with Variety’s holistic approach of providing Variety Kids with the tools they need to navigate their world and reimagine their possibilities.

**About Variety St. Louis:** Variety envisions a world where abilities are redefined and opportunities are reimagined for kids with special needs. To make this a reality, Variety empowers children with physical and developmental disabilities by giving access to critical medical equipment and therapies, along with innovative Camp and Performing Arts programs, which provide opportunities for recreation, socialization, and artistic expression. Children gain or maintain independence, boost socialization among their friends and family, demonstrate belief in themselves, and increase skills they need to engage their world as fully as possible. [www.varietystl.org](http://www.varietystl.org)

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