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The Asolo has extended that show — again!

And the beat goes on. The **Asolo** is extending "Menopause The Musical" through Aug. 7. I have lost track of how many extensions this makes but my Asolo friends tell me that people are driving in from Tampa, Spring Hill, St. Petersburg, Hudson and even Fort Lauderdale to see this show. They come by car, bus and van. A few have even shown up in a limo. One Clearwater lady has already seen the show five times and she is coming back again next week.

At this rate, the Asolo should consider working it into the coming season. With record-breaking crowds, the show is averaging 83 percent capacity in the 500-seat Mertz Theatre for eight performances a week.

No wonder you can almost hear the laughter down in Venice on some nights.

For tickets, call the Asolo box office at 351-8000. The Mertz Theatre is in the Florida State University Center for the Performing Arts at 5555 North Tamiami Trail, Sarasota.

To get a hint of what all the fuss is about, tune in "Talk of the Suncoast" tomorrow at 2 p.m. on 1220 AM (WIBQ). The show's host Cliff Roles will have all four stars of "Menopause The Musical" on his show, which is being extended until 3:30 p.m. that day. To learn more, visit cliffrolles.com/custom2.htm

Fragile bones, firm hearts

STORY BY JEREMY ROTTGEN • STAFF WRITER

Madison Badalamenti has received a gift of freedom from the Suncoast Center for Independent Living.

Madison Badalamenti is a normal child with unusually tender bones, but that doesn't interfere with her having a normal life.

Madison Badalamenti is a talkative and playful 5-year-old girl.

Her pediatrician diagnosed her with osteogenesis imperfecta at the delicate age of 2 weeks.

According to the Osteogenesis Imperfecta Foundation, the condition is a genetic disorder characterized by bones that break easily, often from little or no apparent cause. A person with OI may break a rib while coughing, or a leg by rolling over in their sleep. OI has been documented in all ethnic groups, and affects a person throughout their lifetime.

"She can leave the house, but we don't have a van yet, so we just carry her to the car and everything and she has a power chair," Jennifer Mcleod, Madison's mother said.

Recently, the Suncoast Center for Independent Living built a ramp for little Madison with the help of donations from Home Depot.

"It's really nice to have that built so she can go out," she says about the new ramp.

What the Badalamentis really need is a van to transport little Madison from point A to point B.

"But I have a Barbie jeep," Madison says.

Her mother smiles and continues to share about Madison.

"She's 5 now, so it's an everyday thing for me," Mcleod says. "She's a regular child. It involves a lot of lifting."

Madison can pretty much get on her power chair and do everything. Her main goal with the chair is to get in and out of it herself.

"When she breaks it's really hard on her and everybody, but it's just normal for us,"

II, Madison's father and actor in movies like "Pirates of the Caribbean" and "Barfight," found the Suncoast Center for Independent Living online. He had originally wrote them a letter about getting a donation for a van for Madison. As of yet, there hasn't been any luck on finding a van, but SCIL built a ramp for the power chair so Madison would be able to get outside easier.

"It was really neat that they took that into consideration because we never mentioned it," Mcleod said.

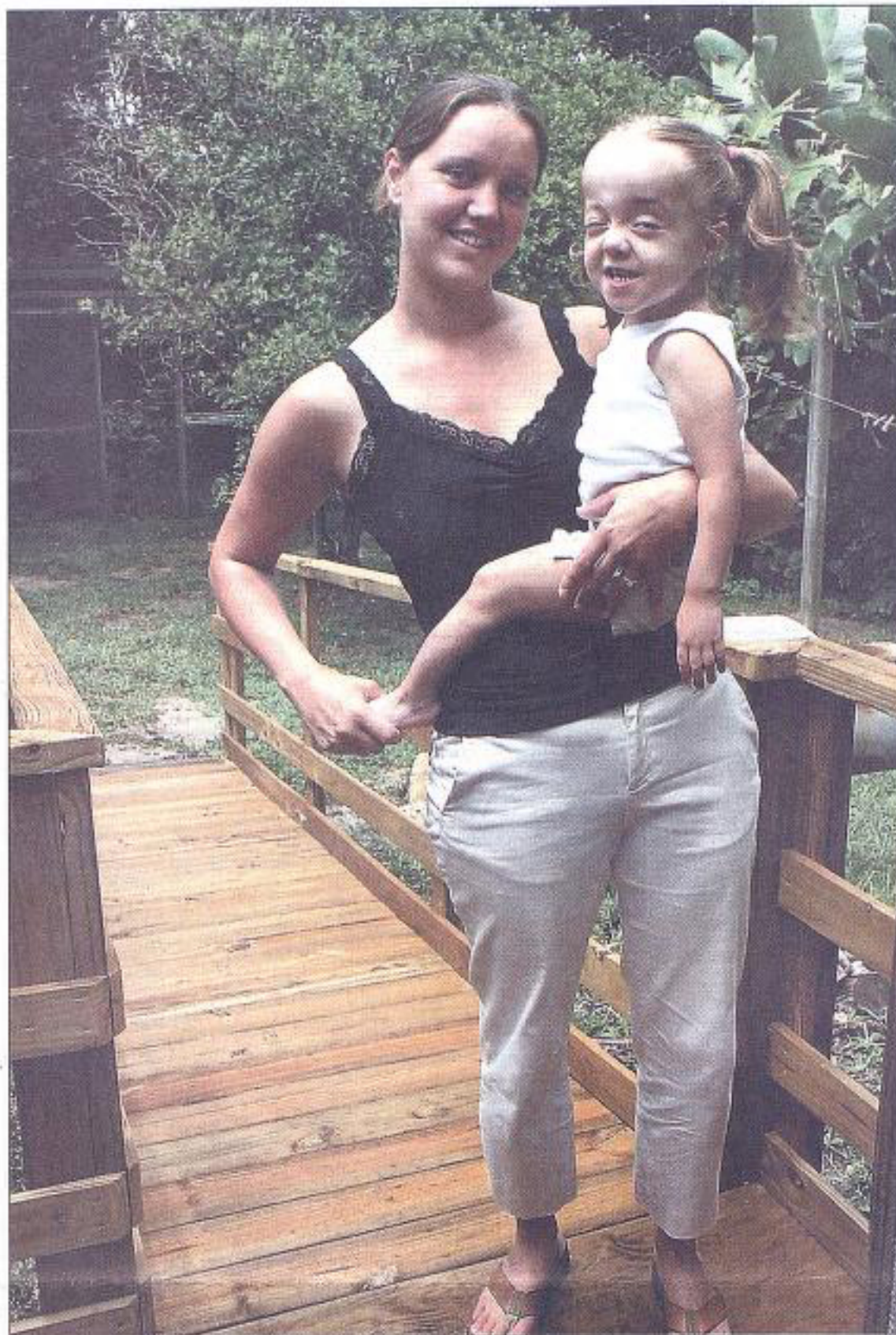
The ramp was constructed by SCIL ramp specialists Ziggy Nosal and Sandy Legrow with help from Madison's father and materials generously donated by the Sarasota Home Depot.

"We are helping people with disabilities live in this community," said Dave Caulfield, program manager for SCIL. "In a natural emergency like a hurricane you just can't beat having a ramp. It makes all the difference."

"Her dad helped us," Legrow said. "She sat in her little chair and watched us. We also made her a mini ramp for the front door. Sweet, little girl. When it was time to try out the ramp she looked like Mario Andretti up there ready to try out the ramp."

Usually the center builds ramps and things for people older than 18. Legrow has been building ramps for about three years and likes having the chance to help out a child. She also delivers medical equipment to people.

The center has to build the ramps according to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Building codes for Sarasota and Manatee county also apply. The code states that any part of an accessible route with a slope greater than 1:20 shall be considered



SUN PHOTOS BY JEREMY ROTTGEN

Jennifer Mcleod holds daughter Madison next to the new ramps that were built for her by the Suncoast Center for Independent Living.

by picking up the chair on Mondays and dropping it off on Fridays.

Madison is excited about starting kindergarten. She seems determined to make it a gaily schoolgirl occasion

and assist individuals to maintain or achieve this. The program never diminishes the rights of an individual to live independently to make his or her own choices. Each individual is encouraged to

comes volunteers with all sorts of skills. These include car drivers, office assistants, home health equipment installers, computer repair technicians, computer instructors and those able to