



**DREAM** Keira Power hopes to be able to walk one day

# Dig deep and make Keira's dreams of walking come true

## Family hope to send five-year-old to USA for operation

by **JEFF TRAINS**

The News

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IF Keira Power had one wish in the world, it would be to walk. She wants to run around like her friends and not have to sit in the corner at parties.

Yet a condition the five-year-old was born with means she cannot walk herself as her muscles are painfully stiff – and means she could have to use a wheelchair for the rest of her life.

Her biggest wish, however, could come true through the power of human goodwill as her family battle to raise £40,000 for a life-changing operation in

### MAKE A WISH

KEIRA'S family has launched a fundraising appeal called 'Keira's Wish'.

They need to raise the £40,000 by October, when they plan to fly to America and stay there several weeks while Keira undergoes the operation. They have already made a good start, largely down to the generosity of strangers who have donated money to them.

Rolo Health Club, in Copnor Road, Portsmouth, has been instrumental by organising a range of fundraising events.

Keira's swimming instructor at the centre, Rachel

America.

The operation, fraught with its own risks, could finally give Keira the gift of walking.

We are not gambling on a great deal, said her dad Jason Power, 35, of Goldcrest Close, Horndean. If she doesn't have the operation she won't be able to walk anyway.

"This would change all our

lives'.

Keira, who attends Horndean Infant School, was born with spastic quadriplegia, a form of cerebral palsy, after being born 12 weeks premature and weighing just 2lbs.

Two years ago doctors said she would never walk independently and she has to use a 'Kaye' Frame to get about. The condition means the muscles in her limbs are extremely stiff.

She walks on her hip-toes with the aid of the frame as her calf muscles are so tight.

As she gets bigger and her muscles become even stiffer, a wheelchair may be her only option.

Every day Keira takes medication, which she calls her 'walking medicine', to ease the tension in her muscles.

Mr Power, who works for BAE Systems and is married to Sally 38, said it was 'heartbreathing' as his daughter often says to him: 'It's not working daddy, I still

Fair, is running the Brighton Marathon on Sunday, April 18. Gym staff have also organised two 'Sundays' to raise money for Keira.

Mr Power said: 'It's restored my faith in human nature that people can be so generous. It's been amazing.'

The target is a tall one yet, however, and the family need all the help they can get. For more details of how you can help visit keiraswish.org.

Cheques can be sent to the Keira Power Appeal, 4 Goldcrest Close, Horndean, PO8 9TB. To contact the appeal email: [Admin@keiraswish.org](mailto:Admin@keiraswish.org)

can't walk'.

'We go to parties and all the other kids are running around and she's in the corner sitting on her own,' he said.

'It destroys you. We want to do everything we can.'

A glimmer of hope has emerged, however, with an operation in St Louis, Missouri, in America, which is common in America but not in Britain, is called Selective Dorsal Rhizotomy.

The operation severs problematic nerve cords in the spinal cord and, in doing so, the tension in the leg muscles is released and a child can walk.

'She's happy and loves her life but she could be happier', said Mr Power.

'It would change her life and make things easier. We have a little two year old boy running around like crazy and that's hard for her to see. She doesn't understand what's wrong with her and why she can't walk.'



**FAMILY** Jason and Sally Power with Keira