



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Jolie Abreu (407) 341-3639  
media@crowdfunnit.org

### **crowdFunnit Jumps Into The Arena To Share Maggie Mays' Birthday With Community**

Young woman with Down syndrome and autism invites community to celebrate her birthday, bringing awareness and compassion to the special needs community of the Roanoke Valley

**Boones Mill, VA:** Maggie Mays, along with crowdFunnit™ invite the community to “horse around,” celebrating similarities, differences and most importantly, her sweet 16 birthday party. Festivities take place **Saturday, February 25th, 12 PM to 2 PM** at Healing Strides Of Virginia, 672 Naff Road, Boones Mill, VA 24065, a therapeutic riding facility.

Early word of the party touched Franklin County Sergeant Joshua Mason of the K9 Patrol Division so much that he and his trusted buddy, a Shepard/Mali mix named Spike, have offered to stop by for a visit. As a combat veteran, Sergeant Mason knows the wonderful potential of therapeutic animals. “It really means a lot to me to see the joy my dog brings to people so I love to do it,” he said.

Maggie was nominated by her family to crowdFunnit, an initiative of the 501(c)3 nonprofit Cherab Foundation dedicated to improving the lives of those who are bullied and alienated, fostering acceptance, compassion and friendship through open-invite birthday parties.

Maggie was born with two holes in her heart. Whereas one has closed, the other is filled with an enthusiasm for life that spills out into her daily activities. However, despite her close relationship with family and caretakers, Maggie has never had a real birthday party with friends. Too many immunity issues keep her indoors during the winter season, away from large crowds and comradery. In addition, numerous other medical discoveries have emerged during her 16 years. It was revealed at birth that Maggie had hearing loss in both ears as well as thyroiditis, then came chronic insomnia, and at age four came the additional diagnosis of autism. Due to her compromised immune system she is home schooled.

When people learn about Maggie, they start apologizing that she has it so rough, says her mom, Robin Mays. “Very few times do people come up and engage her. Often people will just stand and stare. They know something is different, but they are not exactly sure what’s going on and they refrain from engaging with her.” Maggie spends much of her life as an observer, watching other people live theirs. Robin’s modus operandi is to turn that around, educating people on special needs.

Maggie’s family, the Healing Strides staff and crowdFunnit look forward to hosting you, extending the invitation to like-minded, kindhearted individuals to come out for a day of fun, food, friendship and activities. Everyone is welcome to share in the festivities wishing Maggie a 16th birthday to remember.

**Saturday, February 25th, 12 PM to 2 PM** at Healing Strides of Virginia, 672 Naff Road, Boones Mill, VA 24065

<http://crowdfunnit.org/2017/01/03/maggie-mays-sweet-16-birthday-invitation>

<https://www.gofundme.com/maggie-mays-birthday-invitation>

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1265711706856050/>

crowdFunnit Crowd-Sources Special Events For Special Kids: crowdFunnit, a project of the 501(c)3 nonprofit Cherab Foundation, was created to bring people together, raising awareness about differences while fostering acceptance and compassion. Helping a friendless child celebrate a birthday is just an incredible mechanism in which to help make this happen. The party itself and any media attention it brings will help fight bullying at the root while the community connections will exist long after the party ends.