

Pass It On®...

No Strings Attached.

How a 7-year-old girl brings joy to neighbors with her violin.

On a Saturday afternoon, you find most kids outside playing made-up games or dangling from monkey bars. Kids were made for the outdoors, with their boundless energy and the ease in which they make friends. It's no different for Kameron, a normal, fun-loving 7-year-old girl who loves to draw out the world's longest hopscotch on the sidewalk.

In between jump-rope contests, basketball shootouts and skateboard races, Kameron takes time to do something special for her neighbors. Kameron's community is home to a good mix of young families and wizened elderly neighbors whose children have long since left home. Kameron first starts waving to them. Most of them smile back.

Then Kameron decides that some of them need a little cheering up. So she runs home, grabs her violin and makes the rounds. "Can I play you a song?" she asks, after knocking on the door.

Gustav smiles wide. He has a beautiful mop of white hair and a mild accent. He grew up in Scandinavia and is a wood finisher. His wife Vivian has a smile that fills their tiny home. She peeks at Kameron from beneath Gustav's right arm. She stands awkwardly, bent at the waist and her ankles rounded out. It looks terribly uncomfortable. Vivian has had muscular dystrophy for over 20 years. Gustav is her full-time caregiver. They've replaced their daily walks with afternoon drives, but even those are getting too difficult for Vivian.

Gus lets Kameron in, and Vivian takes hold of both their elbows and shuffles to her chair. On the table beside her is a photo of her with Gus when they were young and adventuresome, traveling around Europe, Egypt and Iceland. In the photo, Vivian is stunning, and Gus is dashing and handsome.

"Want me to play your favorite song?" Kameron asks. "Of course," Gus answers. It is the only song Kameron knows.

The small violin rests seriously under Kameron's chin. She plays as best she can, scratching out the

notes to "Edelweiss" in her best beginner effort. Vivian taps her knee visibly to keep rhythm for Kameron. Gus holds Vivian's other hand. It's not the performance that is moving, but the tune of memories it brings, flooding back with the sound of a full orchestra.

"You've been practicing," Vivian says.

Kameron smiles. "See you next week!"

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