

An Inspirational Lawyer?

Author : F.William Houraney

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Indeed she is an inspiration, and fortunately no longer a lawyer. Her name is Stacy Zoern and she lives in Pflugerville, Texas. She quit her job as an intellectual property lawyer to become an entrepreneur and what an inspiring person she is. Check out her story and the video below and see one of the '[Good Guys](#)' at work...

Texas lawyer building hatchback cars made for people in wheelchairs

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For people in wheelchairs, activities like going to work, the grocery store, or get-togethers with relatives require getting a ride from someone or paying for taxi service. Lawyer-turned-entrepreneur Stacy Zoern was not willing to live with this limitation and now is building a new kind of car in Pflugerville, Texas.

Zoern was an intellectual-property lawyer in Austin, when she began searching for ways to get herself, and others in wheelchairs, mobile again.



Zoern quit her job and began to build her company, [Kenguru](#), which has designed small electric cars specifically for people in wheelchairs.

The cars are 7 feet wide and 5 feet tall. There are no seats, so the driver can simply wheel in through the back of the vehicle. A ramp lifts and lowers automatically when the rear door opens. The steering wheel isn't a traditional one either. Instead, Zoern transformed it into a set of motorcycle handlebars for easier control.

After building a management team, fundraising and meeting with manufacturing and engineering partners, Kenguru secured \$4 million from investors and plans to start production later in the year.

The company was named one of the 100 brilliant companies by [Entrepreneur magazine](#), which says that the startup is "Revolutionizing mobility for wheelchair users." The story explains Zoern's personal connection to the business:

Born with spinal muscular atrophy, a form of muscular dystrophy, Zoern has spent her life in a wheelchair. When she was 19, she and her passenger were injured when she lost control of her customized Dodge Grand Caravan; it hit a curb, blew out a tire and crashed headfirst into a light pole, totaling the vehicle. Zoern didn't drive again for more than a decade; after graduating from The University of Texas School of Law, her job search was limited to legal firms within close proximity of her downtown Austin apartment. "Otherwise I would have had to pay for someone to take me to work each day," she explains. "But downtown living is very expensive. It cost my entire paycheck just to live there."

As Zoern searched for new transportation options, she found Istvan Kissaroslaki in Budapest, Hungary. He was working on the car there, but the business faltered when a loan of 2 million euros fell through following the collapse of Lehman Brothers. Zoern contacted Kissaroslaki who traveled to Texas and agreed to relocate operations to Pflugerville. Kenguru is Hungarian for "kangaroo."

The car goes only about 35 miles per hour, so it is meant for local trips only on neighborhood streets. The car's battery range is about 60 miles.

Kenguru cars are projected to sell for around \$25,000, but the cost could go down, depending on federal green energy and mobility tax incentives for some buyers.

From industrial wheelchairs to smart cars with automatic ramps, innovation is everywhere, granting those living in wheelchairs the freedom of independent mobility.

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