



Kevan Chandler grew up in the foothills of North Carolina and is diagnosed with a rare neuromuscular disease called spinal muscular atrophy. In 2016, he and his friends took a trip across Europe, leaving his wheelchair at home, and his friends carried him for three weeks in a backpack. An avid storyteller, he is a writer and speaker worldwide about his friendships and unique life with a disability, being a featured speaker for Tedx and Google, as well as various conferences, pharmaceutical companies, and universities. Kevan has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Counseling from John Wesley College, and is also founder of the nonprofit We Carry Kevan. He and his wife Katie live in Fort Wayne, Indiana, where they enjoy growing vegetables and reading to each other.

WHY KEVAN?

- Despite his challenges, Kevan has chosen to live joyfully, creatively and collaboratively
- Answers accessibility questions through friendship rather than legislation, medicine and independence-centric technology
- Has influenced and assisted others worldwide

AVAILABILITY

- Widely available
- Eastern Daylight Time (Ft. Wayne, IN). Indianapolis, Chicago, Cincinnati, Columbus, Detroit all accessible. Also spends a lot of time in Nashville and Tampa/Orlando.
- Available via any video conferencing platform
- Also has a Google Voice phone #

ONLINE (CLICK TO VISIT)



DOWNLOADS

- [Kevan Chandler headshot](#)
- [Book cover image](#)
- [We Carry Kevan PDF](#)
- [Additional information, images & more](#)

CREDENTIALS

- Born with a rare neuromuscular disease (spinal muscular atrophy)
- Has spent 35 years in a power wheelchair (38 y/o)
- Has spent 38 years fully dependent physically on others
- Founded an non-profit organization that is helping families all over the world, having sold 1,200 backpacks in 48 countries
- Has a bachelor's degree in Counseling from John Wesley College
- Featured in numerous national media publications and is a seasoned radio and podcast guest
- Author of a previous book (more info on page 3)
- DYK (Did You Know?): In high school and college, Kevan played the harmonica and sang in an acoustic punk band called Fluffy Roadkill



MEDIA

Click below to read/watch/listen to prior coverage of Kevan's story.



ABOUT THE BOOK



We Carry Kevan is a delightful children's picture book that follows the true-story adventure of wheelchair-bound Kevan and his friends as they carry him around Europe in a backpack. As they dance in the streets of Paris, trek through the English countryside and climb the island of Skellig Michael, Kevan experiences places he could never otherwise go and discovers the joy of trust and the possibilities of courage.

WHY IS IT RELEVANT?

- It helps us understand true Christian community
- It's a story of uncommon friendship and sacrificial love, which people aren't experiencing in their own lives (giving or receiving). They lean in to find out the secret to how it works, or just hoping it rubs off on them. People are lonely, and when they see friendship like this, they want to be part of it.
- It introduces children to disabilities in a personable and accessible way.
- It inspires friendship and trust among peers.
- It encourages creative self-sacrifice for others.
- There is a push in our culture to bring awareness and normalcy to disabilities.
- There is a focus these days on combatting loneliness, anxiety and depression, the primary solutions being friendship, getting outdoors and caring for others.

WHO IS IT FOR?

- The original purpose for creating this picture book was to share the story with the children who are carried in the WCK backpack, who are often too young to read the full "grown-up" memoir, but would benefit from knowing the story in a relatable context of their own backpack adventure.
- Being a children's book, many parents are drawn specifically to it because they want their children to be familiar with disabilities. They see the friends and want their children to be those kinds of friends to others.
- Children are drawn to the book because of the colors, the imagination, and like everyone else... the friendships. They see Kevan in the book and decide by the end that he's their friend, too.
- Anyone wanting to learn more about real community, friendship
- Young, active families (hiking, traveling, etc.)
- Families who want to be more aware of/inclusive to disabilities
- Children/families with disabilities, especially mobility-related
- Anyone who wants to understand or is inspired by the profound power of friendship and self-sacrifice

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

- Your older sister also has spinal muscular atrophy. What did you learn from watching her navigate this as you grew up? How did having a sibling navigating this same disease alongside you factor into the way you have approached your disability? What do you think/hope others learn from watching you?
- What are the most important things your parents would say to young parents with children who have disabilities or accessibility challenges?
- How do you say thank you, express your gratitude?
- What are the things you wish most often that you could do? And how do you navigate, emotionally and spiritually, not always being able to do those things?
- The idea of Europe came about from having just said 'yes' to a smaller trek, right? What is the power of just saying 'yes'? Seeing possibilities, and not limitations?
- What should kids look for in a friend? How can they be a great friend?
- Two questions you get the most often are 'Where did you get this backpack? And where did you get these friends?' How do you answer those two questions?
- Can you share with us some stories of how other families have used the backpack?
- Can you share a specific instance where your friends' support made a critical difference in overcoming a challenging part of the journey?
- How did your friendships evolve throughout the trip, and were there any surprising discoveries you made about your friends or yourself?
- What was the most profound act of kindness or faith you experienced during your travels, and how did it impact you?
- Can you tell us about a particularly difficult day on your journey and how the power of friendship helped you get through it?
- How did you and your friends handle any disagreements or stressful moments during your travels, and what did these moments teach you about trust and patience?
- Was there a specific moment or place during your trip that felt especially transformative or spiritual for you?
- How did the journey change your perspective on what it means to be truly supported by friends and community?
- What is the reaction of children when you share your story with them, and how did their responses influence the way you wrote your book?
- What can families or individuals with accessibility issues learn?
- What's the biggest obstacle people with disabilities - and those that love them - have to overcome?
- What can your trips teach others about knowing your strengths/spiritual gifts and utilizing them?

ENDORSEMENTS

"*We Carry Kevan* is a refreshing story of one man's personal journey that unfolds into a community's adventure. Through joy, pain, and friendship, Kevan Chandler reminds us that we are to take every day as a gift from God and live it to its fullest—especially with those we call friends. Through honest reflection and innovative adventure, *We Carry Kevan* will inspire and motivate every reader to live beyond their perceived limits and encourage those we love to do the same."

Steve Bundy
SVP, Joni and Friends International Disability Center

"Kevan Chandler takes readers along on an extraordinary adventure filled with stories of friendship, faith, and perseverance. The courage and determination that this incredible group of friends displayed throughout this amazing journey provide a beacon of hope to all those with disabilities, and I firmly believe that hope is the most powerful gift you can give another human being. *We Carry Kevan* will inspire readers to reach for the stars, reminding us that all things are possible."

Pamela Landwirth
President and CEO, Give Kids the World Village

"*We Carry Kevan* is a book of unlikely adventures undertaken on the backs of friends. In these pages we are given an honest glimpse into new yet familiar hopes and struggles, and we are reminded of our profound need for one another. This is a story of selfless love and friendship; a journey where each step is taken in anticipation of the coming kingdom and the day when all things will be made new."

Dr. D. Jeffrey Bingham
Professor, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

"In 2012, I was finishing my master's degree at Queen's University Belfast, writing my dissertation on the way in which the church serves as a community of support for families adopting children with complex disabilities. My research pulled heavily from the writings of John, and of how Jesus's encouragement to his church pushes far beyond a desire to live good and moral lives—it is an invitation to radically welcome one another into each other's lives through mutual self-sacrifice and love. In 2012, Kevan Chandler was in the midst of writing a commentary on John, experiencing firsthand what that level of radical welcoming can look like. It is no wonder that God would orchestrate our paths to cross some years later, as we each pursued a deeper understanding of what this type of welcoming could look like for orphans around the world. *We Carry Kevan* is a whimsical, compelling, challenging, and often breathtaking look at the depth of community and love possible if we have the heart to give ourselves to it."

Emily Chapman Richards
Executive Director, Show Hope

"The question of how we might form true Christian community has been a trendy topic in the Western church for decades. *We Carry Kevan* makes me wonder if we've been approaching the question far too abstractly. Kevan's honest and moving travelogue is an essential reminder that shared vulnerability and Christ-imitating service are the real bricks and mortar from which true Christian community must always be formed."

Douglas Kaine McKelvey
Critically Acclaimed Songwriter and Author of *Every Moment Holy*

"Kevan Chandler's story gives me courage, and it reminds me that friendship truly is one of the great creative forces of the world."

Jonathan Rogers
Host of *The Habit Podcast* and author of *The Wilderking Trilogy*

"I have long believed that it's hard to produce good gifts—in stories, art, or almost any endeavor—apart from pain. Birth pains bring longed-for life, and a cross comes before a crown. Kevan's life is a story of changing pain into powerful gifts, turning limits into launchpads."

S.D. Smith
Author of *The Green Ember Series*



Note: Endorsements are for Kevan's previous book, [*'We Carry Kevan: Six Friends, Three Countries, No Wheelchair'*](#) (*Worthy Books, 2020*).

A story about friendships and commitment to one another so incredible you wouldn't believe it if it wasn't true.

Kevan is just one of the guys. It's impossible to know him and not become a little more excited about life. He is an inspiring man permeated by joy, unafraid of sorrow, full of vitality and life! His sense of humor is infectious and so is his story.

He grew up, he says, at "belt-buckle level" and stayed there until Kevan's beloved posse decided to leave his wheelchair at the Atlanta airport, board a plane for France, and have his friends carry him around Europe to accomplish their dream to see the world together! Kevan's beloved posse traveled to Paris, England, and Ireland where, in the climax of their adventure, they scale 600 feet up to the 1,400-year-old monastic fortress of Skellig Michael.

In *We Carry Kevan*, the reader sits with Kevan, one head-level above everyone else for the first time in his life and enjoys camaraderie unlike anything most people ever experience. Along the way they encounter the curiosity and beauty of strangers, the human family disarmed by grace, and the constant love of God so rich and beautiful in the company of good friends. *We Carry Kevan* displays the profound power of friendship and self-sacrifice.

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION



WE CARRY KEVAN

We Carry Kevan is a non-profit organization birthed in 2016 to help those with disabilities achieve more freedom, access, and joy in life. The team is redefining accessibility as a cooperative effort, something we can achieve when we work together.

Founder Kevan Chandler, born in 1986 with Spinal Muscular Atrophy, and his team have created a special backpack that is helping make the world more accessible for thousands of families, as well as a growing community of support and education through friendships that bridges the gap between able-bodied and disabled populations. Kevan believes that together, we can not only make the world accessible for everyone, but we can learn incredible lessons about compassion, community, love, sacrifice and friendship.

“the message is for the disabled community as well as able-bodied. we need each other to make it happen. if we are creative and courageous enough to give it a try, then the world becomes accessible.”



WATCH



See a demo of the backpack.



Watch episode one of Kevan's trip to China.



Watch Kevan's speaker's promo video.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- For more information, including the mission, events, products, how to contribute, visit the website at wecarrykevan.org
- For additional images, videos, stories and official organization language free for publication, [click here](#)