

Changing THE WORLD



WINTER 2017

A MESSAGE FROM KEN BEHRING



I spent time traveling the last month. We were in China, where I attended the opening Ceremony of the *Qinqdao Behring Natural History Museum*, which I am very proud of. We visited museums we are working with in Shaanxi and Yangzhou, and visited the site of a museum yet-to-be-built near Nanchang.

When we go to China, I see the rapid pace of change China and the Chinese people are going through. Building, manufacturing, agriculture, infrastructure, schools and education all must rapidly adapt as cities of tens of millions emerge across the country. As we travel from city to city, I look out and ponder, "what will this all look like in ten years?"

What will the world look like in ten years? Modern technology is allowing the creation of amazing things, but where is the innovation and how do we keep up with basic needs? I wonder if my grandchildren might be the last generation to drive a car without artificial intelligence avoiding collisions and taking the wheel when they are bored. In ten years where will our fresh water come from and how will we feed a growing global population? How do we improve on everything we do, in ten years and what does that look like?

Like driving a car, if you want to know what is coming, it is best to look as far ahead as you possibly can. Unless, the car does the looking for you.

Kenneth E. Behring
Founder and Chairman

Mission and Goals

Our Mission

The Wheelchair Foundation is a nonprofit organization leading an international effort to create awareness of the needs and abilities of people with physical disabilities, to promote the joy of giving, create global friendship, and to deliver a wheelchair to every child, teen and adult in the world who needs one, but cannot afford one. For these people, the Wheelchair Foundation delivers Hope, Mobility and Freedom.

Our Goal

The Wheelchair Foundation aims to deliver wheelchairs to people who cannot afford to buy one, and to further the awareness that a wheelchair is no longer an unaffordable relief option for delivery to developing countries around the world.

Mobility

Since its establishment on June 13, 2000, the Wheelchair Foundation has witnessed hundreds of thousands of examples of how mobility creates independence and new possibilities for recipients and their families. A mobile child is able to attend school. A mobile adult is able to get a job and provide for their family, or care for the children at home so the spouse can work. An elderly person can rejoin society or family activities after years of staying in a bed. The joy and hope that a simple mobility device can deliver is what gives people a new outlook on life and hope for the future.

Changing the World
is published by:

Wheelchair Foundation,
3820 Blackhawk Road,
Danville, CA 94506
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Winter 2017 Issue.

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Wheelchair
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WHEELCHAIRS COMMITTED OR DELIVERED

Afghanistan.....	7,150	Lithuania.....	1,090
Albania.....	550	Macedonia.....	760
Algeria.....	1,480	Madagascar.....	1,270
Angola.....	6,790	Malawi.....	3,530
Antigua and Barbuda.....	280	Malaysia.....	4,040
Argentina.....	11,569	Maldives.....	10
Armenia.....	3,244	Mali.....	1,060
Australia.....	292	Malta.....	240
Azerbaijan.....	280	Marshall Islands.....	140
Bahamas.....	2,620	Mauritania.....	100
Bangladesh.....	350	Mexico.....	168,939
Barbados.....	1,400	Micronesia.....	1,265
Belarus.....	990	Moldova.....	1,720
Belgium.....	280	Mongolia.....	1,320
Belize.....	3,095	Montenegro.....	120
Benin.....	280	Morocco.....	5,470
Bolivia.....	5,574	Mozambique.....	1,660
Bosnia-Herzegovina.....	2,040	Myanmar (Burma).....	900
Botswana.....	1,688	Namibia.....	466
Brazil.....	2,305	Nepal.....	3,380
Bulgaria.....	530	Nicaragua.....	8,705
Burundi.....	520	Niger.....	240
Cambodia.....	3,730	Nigeria.....	1,420
Canada.....	560	Northern Mariana Islands.....	410
Cape Verde.....	780	Oman.....	280
Central African Republic.....	240	Pakistan.....	3,175
Chile.....	11,668	Palestinian Territories.....	1,906
China.....	428,181	Panama.....	14,100
Colombia.....	13,102	Papua New Guinea.....	2,180
Congo, The Democratic Republic of the.....	205	Paraguay.....	2,614
Costa Rica.....	9,309	Peru.....	13,607
Croatia.....	1,300	Philippines.....	10,835
Cuba.....	1,800	Poland.....	2,700
Cyprus.....	280	Portugal.....	990
Czech Republic.....	597	Puerto Rico.....	490
Dominica.....	280	Romania.....	3,571
Dominican Republic.....	9,063	Russia.....	2,230
East Timor.....	110	Rwanda.....	2,200
Ecuador.....	9,889	Saint Lucia.....	830
Egypt.....	1,168	Saint Petersburg.....	120
El Salvador.....	10,575	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.....	665
Eritrea.....	250	Samoa.....	1,360
Estonia.....	500	Saudi Arabia.....	20
Ethiopia.....	3,468	Senegal.....	630
Fiji.....	2,060	Serbia.....	2,370
France.....	560	Seychelles.....	30
French Polynesia.....	280	Sierra Leone.....	2,610
Georgia.....	1,030	Slovenia.....	110
Ghana.....	2,610	Solomon Islands.....	110
Greece.....	520	Somalia.....	88
Grenada.....	280	South Africa.....	23,060
Guam.....	250	Spain.....	500
Guatemala.....	9,723	Sri Lanka.....	3,170
Guyana.....	250	Sudan.....	280
Haiti.....	5,320	Suriname.....	520
Honduras.....	7,544	Swaziland.....	1,970
Hong Kong.....	970	Syria.....	641
Hungary.....	120	Taiwan.....	756
India.....	2,716	Tajikistan.....	480
Indonesia.....	3,340	Tanzania.....	4,018
Iran.....	3,880	Thailand.....	8,640
Iraq.....	4,300	Tibet.....	331
Israel.....	8,110	Tonga.....	500
Italy.....	580	Trinidad & Tobago.....	5,980
Jamaica.....	4,080	Turkey.....	5,550
Japan.....	1,750	Turkmenistan.....	520
Jordan.....	5,022	Uganda.....	10,184
Kazakhstan.....	1,510	Ukraine.....	5,630
Kenya.....	2,930	United States.....	36,904
Kiribati.....	375	Uruguay.....	1,862
Korea, North.....	1,352	Uzbekistan.....	1,240
Korea, South.....	5,700	Vanuatu.....	250
Kosovo.....	1,300	Venezuela.....	3,030
Kyrgyzstan.....	1,240	Vietnam.....	14,476
Laos.....	780	Virgin Islands (UK).....	284
Latvia.....	740	Virgin Islands (US).....	280
Lebanon.....	2,430	Western Sahara.....	153
Lesotho.....	1,060	Zambia.....	2,646
Liberia.....	780	Zimbabwe.....	2,840

TOTAL COUNTRIES AND REGIONS.....150+
TOTAL WHEELCHAIRS.....1,061,600

A NEW COMMITMENT TO HELP THE DISABLED OF UGANDA



After 29 distribution trips to 19 countries we thought we had a full understanding of the need for wheelchairs in the developing world. However, what we saw in Uganda was heartbreaking and has made us even more committed to providing mobility to those in need.

We delivered approximately 100 wheelchairs in each of five regional towns. Word of the distributions spread and in every town there were 30 or 40 additional people who crawled (some for miles) to the distribution site hoping they too would receive a wheelchair. They didn't feel entitled, they didn't beg or get angry, they just sat there on the ground staring up at us hoping there would be an extra wheelchair. That day my son Josh and I made a commitment to each other that we would send more wheelchairs to Northern Uganda in 2018.

-Don Routh

WHEELCHAIR FOUNDATION AND HEDCO SEND WHEELCHAIRS TO SIERRA LEONE'S PARADISE 4 KIDS



Rev Dr. Themistocles Adamopoulou established the *Disabled Village* in Freetown's fringe suburb of Waterloo, housing hundreds of families of disabled (the poorest of the poor) and their families. Wheelchair Foundation and HEDCO recently sent 270 wheelchairs to *Paradise 4 Kids* in Sierra Leone in support of Brother Them's work with children affected by HIV/AIDS, disability and the tragedy of war.
www.paradise4kids.org

MOBILITY FOR AFRICA



In October, Behring Global Educational Foundation made a trip around the world. We stopped in Europe before heading to Africa, and then onward to China. Although our experiences in Europe and Asia were dear to us, the opportunity to deliver wheelchairs and walkers to those in need along the way made Africa a highlight this year.

Departing Europe, we flew to Tanzania and soon arrived at the *Cultural Center* in Arusha, for a distribution of wheelchairs and walkers with our friend, Jan Ramoni of *Conservation Foundation Tanzania*, and Saif Khanbhai, Director of Cultural Heritage. There is no more heartwarming and inspiring accomplishment to witness than that of a child being carried everywhere by a parent one moment, then to suddenly see that same child with a walker and their own willpower, glide across a room, ecstatic with excitement and joy! Each wheelchair and walker recipient, and family, wished to thank us with a handshake and a smiling face, making the significance of this donation all the more personal.



We left Tanzania and headed to northeastern South Africa, to the town of White River. Here we distributed wheelchairs and walkers with Cecil Corringham and the staff of *Lifeform Taxidermy*. White River is not far from Kruger National Park, and the close knit community helped find disabled in need of wheelchairs who might not otherwise been reached.

We stopped to refuel in the Republic of Seychelles, nearly 1,000 miles off the coast of eastern Africa, on our way to China. Here we dropped off 20 Wheelchair Foundation wheelchairs and 9 walkers donated to us by *Dynatronics* of Livermore, California. We received thanks from the Ministry of Health and greatly enjoyed the company and hospitality of the Rotary Club of Victoria, Seychelles.

The chance to help someone into a wheelchair for the first time turned out to be an emotional and moving experience for everyone. To get to see how simple mobility can free the human spirit is uniquely special. Around the world, at every stop, we all felt like we had accomplished something good and positive together.

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT: >>> You might never consider a tiny walker for a very young child, but just as they do for the elderly who use them, they can provide just the right stability when it is tough to get around. Walkers allow youngsters to build muscle and gain balance. >>> Ken Behring receives a handshake from a grateful young man in Tanzania, eager to share his thanks for his new mobility. >>> Cecil and Tanya from *Lifeform Taxidermy* in White River, South Africa, giving locals in their community some much needed mobility in the form of wheelchairs. >>> Brightly colored dresses on the local ladies express their gratitude in dance, in South Africa. >>>

A WHEELCHAIR LOVE STORY ~ RELIEF FOR GEORGIA ~



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: >>> A beautiful, sunny morning on October 6, when over 30 volunteers at the Skidaway Island United Methodist Church on Skidaway Island, Savannah, Georgia, receive 100 wheelchairs for disadvantaged individuals, and organizations that help them. >>> Wheelchairs, unboxed and assembled, awaiting pick up by recipients and local organizations. >>> Pennie Lightfoot of *Abilities Unlimited, Inc.*, fundraiser and event co-chairwoman, Patty Kleiber with her husband, Rick Harding, and Jessica Pepin and Special Olympian McKenzie Hancock posing for a quick photo with beneficiaries Jennifer Moss and Stevie Bowley. >>> The whole family turns out to receive a wheelchair for their matriarch. Another example of many generations benefitting from one wheelchair. >>> Patty Kleiber addresses volunteers at the Skidaway Island United Methodist Church. >>>

Cheers ring out as the truck arrived from the Port of Savannah, Georgia, thus ending the five-month process of obtaining our wheelchairs for the State of Georgia. As the container seals are opened, our team of volunteers are ready to jump into action. We methodically unboxed and assembled wheelchairs of various sizes for local recipients. The remaining boxes get sorted inside the church's reception hall for each organization for pick up!

Excitement mounted when local wheelchair recipients and their caregivers started to arrive! Each recipient was in desperate need of a wheelchair and could not afford to buy one. Tears of joy, hugs of heartfelt thanks, and immeasurable happiness filled the hearts of everyone in attendance! The smiles of caregivers, recipients, and volunteers who helped lift each deserving person into their new wheelchair were simply priceless.

Directors from receiving organizations shared the mission and outreach of their group as they work with those less fortunate in our community and state. The following organizations received wheelchairs at our distribution:

War Veterans Nursing Home (Augusta, GA); GA War Veterans Home (Milledgeville GA); Senior Citizens, Inc.; Chatham County Department of Family Services (DFCS); Coastal Center for Developmental Services; (CCDS), Abilities Unlimited; Union Mission; Memorial Case Management Department; Friends of Disabled Adults and Children (FODAC - Atlanta, GA); United Way of the Coastal Empire; and Living Independence for Everyone, Inc. (LIFE).

Providing the gift of hope, mobility, and freedom to those in need changes lives forever. Thank you to our wonderful philanthropic island for making the distribution of 100 wheelchairs in Georgia possible! We look forward to next year's Wine for Wheels charity event in October 2018!

With joy,

Patty Kleiber, Co-chairman
Skidaway Island
Wine for Wheels Charity Event



MOBILITY FOR AMERICA

RESPONDING TO 2017'S HURRICANES AND WILDFIRES



Many reading will not remember *Arlene*, our first tropical storm of the year, in April. More will recognize the names *Harvey*, *Irma*, *Katia*, *Maria* and *Ophelia*, and can recall all the devastation they wrought on Texas, Louisiana, Florida, Puerto Rico, and other States. These storms dropped trillions of gallons of rain, displaced tens of thousands and caused billions of dollars in damage.

Jack Drury, President of Wheelchair Foundation's Florida office, shares his account with *Irma*:

"As we all watched the weather reports about hurricane *Irma*, we kept hoping she would dissipate or make that turn so she would not make landfall. But all she did was get bigger and stronger, staying her course. So now we are all dealing with the aftermath and devastation that the destructive power of a storm like her brings.

The office for Wheelchair Foundation here in Florida is in my house, which was hit hard – to the extent that we are unable to live there. My wife & I, both in our mid-80's, have been living in hotels since *Irma* tore through South Florida. But... that's not the story. The story is all the brave partners we have in the Caribbean in places like Barbados, Nassau the Bahamas, Dominican Republic and Jamaica...mostly Rotarians that did not let the hurricane stop their desire to help the disabled in their countries. Wheelchair containers are now in Nassau and the Dominican Republic, ready to be distributed. Orders have been placed for Jamaica and Barbados.

So, *Irma* – you can't fool around with the desire and love of the partners of our Foundation!"

October brought Northern California a series of wildfires that burned everything in their paths, and left thousands without homes or possessions. Victims of the wildfires had very little warning and evacuated in the dark of night, leaving all worldly possessions behind.

The smoke from the fires in Napa and Sonoma, California, clouded our offices in the East Bay, near San Francisco. As the smoke clears and the ash settles, Wheelchair Foundation is offering wheelchairs to those displaced by the wildfires. We realize that the recovery process takes time, victims are still assessing their losses and many are, just now, being allowed to return home following the devastation.



ABOVE LEFT: >>> Texas First Responders save the day as hurricane Harvey battered the greater Houston, Texas, area with more rain than had ever been seen. Rapid flooding required immediate evacuation of the elderly and infirmed. >>> ABOVE RIGHT: >>> Wildfires in the cities of Napa and Sonoma, California, incinerated neighborhoods. A hot summer left dense underbrush primed to burn. Fire fighters woke residents in the middle of the night, leaving those in the path with no time to pack. Unfortunately, nearly nothing left behind survived, not even wheelchairs and walkers. >>>

Wine for Wheels and Wheelchair Foundation's *Mobility for America* are raising funds for Napa and Sonoma, California, areas affected by the wildfires and for the victims of recent natural catastrophes. Your donations help us meet these needs. Thank you!



MOBILITY FOR MEXICO

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 10TH 2018



2018 WHEELCHAIR FOUNDATION GALA

MARIACHI - MARGARITAS - FOOD - WINE - MUSIC

SPECIAL KEYNOTE BY:

NATHAN OGDEN

INSPIRATIONAL SPEAKER, AUTHOR AND COACH

VIP COCKTAIL PARTY

5:30PM-6:30PM

LIVE & SILENT AUCTION: 7PM-9PM

SCOTT'S MEXICAN SEAFOOD: BLACK TIE OPTIONAL



season highlights

CHANGING THE WORLD



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT: >>>Members of the Rotary Club of Victoria, Seychelles and the Ministry of Health pose with Wheelchair Foundation's Steve Beinke and Charli Butterfield. The chance to donate walkers and wheelchairs to the Islands is a special treat! >>> Josh Routh, one of Wheelchair Foundation's most active advocates, finds common ground with a wheelchair recipient in Uganda. Josh has visited 19 countries in his wheelchair and inspires other riders everywhere he goes. >>> Lew Carpenter, Ryan Hansen, Gordon Zanin and Rich Bricker, the winning foursome from this year's *Drive Fore Mobility* golf tournament. Congratulations gentlemen! >>> Princeton University Class of 1977's reunion wheelchair distribution project in Peru helps indigenous children, adults and families living at altitude. Recipients showed up in beautiful finery in honor of this event to share mobility. >>> Patricia Behring, grandchildren Stephanie and Christopher and son, David Behring with Maasai wheelchair recipients in Tanzania. >>>





CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: >>> United States Air Force Colonel Charles Sapper was our guest of honor at the 2017 Farmers Insurance Drive Fore Mobility golf tournament to benefit Wheelchair Foundation. Col. Sapper flew 30 missions over Germany as the lead bomber of a B-17 formation and was present on D-Day. It was an honor for all to be in the presence of a true American hero. >>> Steve Goldston and Bob Withers, both members of the Phoenix Rotary 100 , worked with the organization *Adopt a Native Elder* to provide wheelchairs at the *Big Mountain* location on Navajo land in Northern Arizona. >>> Val Nunes and Bob Herzog, co-chairmen of the 2017 *Drive Fore Mobility* golf tournament, did an outstanding job. Thank you both! >>> *Paradise 4 Kids* in Freetown, Sierra Leone, shows how one wheelchair can allow a child a chance to reconnect with his community. >>> Princeton University classmates work to make a new wheelchair recipient comfortable and safe in her red wheelchair, at one of multiple stops while distributing wheelchairs in Peru. >>>



LIVING LIFE UNFROZEN



By Roseann Papageorge

A tragic skiing accident in 2001 rendered Nathan Ogden paralyzed. Rehabilitation allowed him to regain much of his mobility, but another misfortune undid his progress and forced him to persevere. His new life as a quadriplegic did not slow him down, but inspired him to live “Unfrozen,” and Nathan’s story and outlook on life are inspiring.

This past spring his journey brought him to Wheelchair Foundation where he wanted to partner to raise money and awareness for others in need of mobility. Nathan and his family committed to a 1200-mile bike ride from Bend, Oregon, to Los Angeles, California. Nathan would ride his three-wheeled hand cycle and the family would ride bicycles.

Starting from the location of his accident, his wife Heather, and their four children (Seniya 18, Kyler 16, Malani 12, Cortlyn 10), trekked down the Pacific coast, taking on 115 miles a day. They worked their way through the majestic redwoods to the iconic Golden Gate Bridge. The heat wave of this last July proved trying, but they pressed on to Santa Cruz, California, and beyond.





FACING PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: >>> The Ogden family at the iconic Golden Gate Bridge, near San Francisco, California. >>> Fully equipped sag wagons followed the family on their journey. The group hauled camping trailers and a film crew during the 1200 mile trip. >>> The Ogden girls enjoy a pause with a worker from the California Department of Transportation. >>> Logging 115 miles per day along the way made for long, long days. >>> CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: >>> Nathan Ogden riding his hand cycle along the Pacific Coast highway. >>> The Ogden children stopped for lunch. >>> Mission accomplished, the Ogden family celebrates making their way to the Santa Monica Pier, 12 days and 1200 miles to share mobility with others! >>>



Falls, bruises, scrapes and flat tires only pushed the family harder as they made their way to Southern California. Donations came in from fellow cyclists they met in route, small businesses, family and friends, and complete strangers. Their incredible journey ended the afternoon of July 21, 2017.

It was a stunning day at Santa Monica Pier. Family and friends cheered as the Ogden family crossed the finish line. Twelve hundred miles, 12 days of hard work and a constant push from each other had paid off. The Ogden family raised over \$44,000 toward their goal of \$100,000.



I was 11-months-old when my dad broke his neck snow skiing, leaving him a quadriplegic, paralyzed from the chest down and with only partial movement in his arms. For the last 15 years, my whole life has revolved around having a wheelchair in our home or in our car, and when my dad wasn't sitting in it I would take it for a spin and do pop-a-wheelies. I've learned firsthand how much independence and hope a wheelchair provides someone who can't move. That's why I wanted to be involved in this fundraiser.

Throughout the trailer we slept in, as we rode our bikes along the Pacific Coast, there were pictures of people in underdeveloped countries with disabilities. During those moments when it was hot and my body was giving up, when my legs had nothing left to give and I was mentally worn out with another 5 miles uphill still to go, I would picture in my mind these kids in desperate need of a wheelchair and push myself even harder since they are not able to. The pain I felt in those moments has passed, but the independence our family is helping provide will last for a lifetime. I am so excited to travel down to southern Mexico next spring and personally give people hope in the form of a wheelchair.

-Kyler Ogden



PRINCETON UNIVERSITY CLASS OF 1977 DELIVERING WHEELCHAIRS BY RAIL IN PERU

What do you call a 40th college reunion class from Princeton, a Rotary Club in Lima, Peru, a Foundation in California and a railroad company from Pittsburgh? The answer is a great partnership to help those in need of mobility!

This past August, the Princeton Class of 1977, the Rotary Club of San Borja Sur, *Railroad Development Corporation's* Central Andean Railroad and the Wheelchair Foundation combined efforts to bring wheelchairs to the people of Peru. Over a five day period, we distributed wheelchairs in Cuzco, the capital of the great Incan Empire, and ended up with two distributions in Lima, the capital of modern Peru. In between, we smoothly ascended over three miles high by rail and roller-coasted back to sea level by bus on the serpentine Central Highway.

CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT: >>> Fred Doar poses with a young wheelchair recipient and his mother. Mobility replacing the burden of disability is an example of a wheelchair making a change for a whole family. >>> Roger Ruckert and his wife, Kristine, with a mother and daughter receiving a wheelchair. >>> Princeton University Class of 1977 celebrating their 40th class reunion at 15,831 feet above sea level. >>>

On the trip, we made rail and bus stops to distribute chairs in Chosica, San Bartolome, San Jeronimo de Surco, Matucana, La Orola, Acobamba and Nueva Morococha.

Most of our recipients fell into one of two categories. The first category consisted of elderly Peruvians, mostly women, and almost all dressed up in their best traditional clothing to receive their chairs. The second category is children suffering from cerebral palsy. Many of these boys and girls have severe, spastic cerebral palsy. We also served amputees and those with trauma induced brain damage. Regardless of the category, the recipients and their families were overjoyed to receive the wheelchairs and the toys and gifts that we brought.





Not only did the recipients get dressed up, so did all of the distribution sites. In the frigid Andes, we were warmly received with pachamanca in Surco, and a community dinner in Acobamba. In La Oroya, folk dancers met us at the train station and escorted us, out of breath at “only” 12,000 feet high, dancing to the town square. In Nueva Morococha, we were greeted and feted as the first “outsiders” to ever visit. There, the folk dancers danced breathlessly, but we had trouble breathing while we were sitting down, watching them at 14,000 feet.

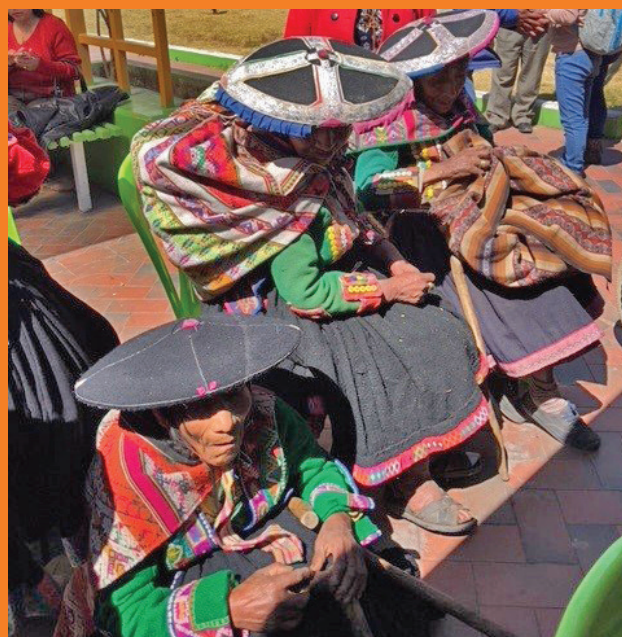
Back in Lima, we assembled and donated highly specialized wheelchairs at the clinic of San Juan de Dios. Children and their families come to this very special hospital from the four suyos of Peru. Our final distribution was in the gritty but upcoming Rimac section of Peru, where we also toured a school for severely impaired children.

Five days of distributions, 49 people on the ground, many more in the background supporting our efforts, 77 financial supporters and thousands of emails and phone calls. It required a lot of work and love by all. The positive effect that it had on both the recipients, and us, the donors, made it all worthwhile.

-William Farrell - Princeton University Class of '77



ABOVE : >>> Judy Wong with colorfully dressed Peruvian Ladies. >>>
 LOWER LEFT: >>> A first time wheelchair recipient and a happy father. A wheelchair is a rare blessing in a village that seldom sees visitors. >>>
 LOWER RIGHT: >>> Classmates work to make a recipient comfortable in a new red wheelchair. Together the Class of '77 made nine wheelchair distribution stops in less than a week. >>>



Amidst the controlled chaos, four elderly women dressed in traditional garb arrived. Peering out from round, slightly domed hats, each struggled to carry her corner of a thick rectangular blanket. The bottom of the fabric box bulged significantly, evidencing the weight of its content. The women's progress was further hampered by the large colorful bundles tied to their bent backs. Their multilayered skirts swayed and bobbed as they wound their way to a small gap where they laid down their burden.

I was curious. What could they be carrying? Each woman pulled her corner down and away, revealing the sun-aged face of an ancient occupant. The sight of her took my breath away. The woman sat cross-legged, clutching two hand-carved canes. Only about a foot long, they served to maneuver her into a more comfortable position. It was obvious who the recipient of the wheelchair was to be, but what was not clear was how the five had gotten there. The four carrying the fifth to a bus? And then to the venue?

Verbal communication was not possible. After a brief attempt I realized they neither understood nor spoke Spanish, and I know no Quechua. Luckily wheelchairs bridge gaps and subsequent words were neither spoken nor necessary. The look of relief, gratitude and joy evident in the eyes of the recipient and her four companions was transcendent. Thanks to the generosity of a donor, a centenary received the gift of dignified mobility.

-Donna Pierce Freeman - Princeton University Class of '77



ASANTE SANA, AFRICA!



Contributed by Stephanie Behring

Since my last trip to Africa at age 14, I had dreams to return, but I wanted to make the trip happen completely on my own. My father suggested that one way I could return would be to fund containers of wheelchairs to distribute. Therefore, 3 years ago, that dream to return to Africa became, not a plan, but a mission. For three years in a row, I spoke at Rotary Club after Rotary Club, putting together presentations on Wheelchair Foundation. I spoke at local schools, and put together fundraisers hoping that people would aid me on this mission.

When I was 14-years-old, I had the opportunity to travel to South Africa to deliver wheelchairs with my family's humanitarian aid foundation, Wheelchair Foundation. Though I had always felt it was my calling to serve others, it was this pivotal trip that transformed the course of my life and who I was as a Daughter of the King.



I was able to raise \$42,500. My dream had come alive and before I knew it, we were contacting non-profits and organizations in Africa to distribute wheelchairs, and booking our flights to Tanzania

July 8th, 2017: We arrived in Tanzania and met Rose, a kind woman from Conservation Foundation Tanzania, our distribution partner. Rose took us to our first wheelchair distribution, at the Arusha District Commissioners Office.



FACING PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: >>> Our author, Stephanie Behring, shares a laugh with a recipient in Tanzania >>> Wheelchair Foundation President, David Behring, gets a handshake from a happy gentleman, eager to make a new friend. >>> THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: Jessica Behring gets a thumbs-up for a new wheelchair at a rural wheelchair distribution in Tanzania. >>> The girl-who-pushed-her-friend-35-miles so he could receive a wheelchair. >>>

When we pulled up, we saw more than 100 smiling recipients, supporters, and family members. I will never forget seeing so much joy and gratitude in one sitting.

We were escorted to a small white table, in front of all the recipients, where members of the Tanzanian government introduced us and spoke about our foundation and its mission. I also learned that African politicians love to talk, so these speeches actually continued for about an hour. Before we began placing the recipients in the wheelchairs, my father and I were able to give speeches of our own and it was nifty to have our own Swahili translator.

July 9th, 2017: This marked our second wheelchair distribution, which took place in the town of Monduli, at the Monduli Rehabilitation Centre, where we were once again greeted with about 75 smiling and joyous faces! We were able to see the rehabilitation services provided by the Tanzanian government and visit with a few of the children who were recovering from amputations, limb separation, prosthetic limb attachment, or facial surgeries.

We set up the 50+ wheelchairs we had brought with us, most of them being “Kanga” wheelchairs specialized for those with higher order disabilities. Many recipients were children, and upon seeing all of them, I immediately wished that we had been able to provide more of the “Kanga” wheelchairs (which is tough because they are pricier at \$650 per wheelchair versus \$150 for the standard manual ones).

As always, it is incredibly difficult to see these disabilities and struggles that plague third world countries and this distribution was no exception.

One of the most heart-wrenching feelings comes from seeing the way people live when they are immobile. Recipients arrived on motorcycles strapped to the driver, crawled their way to the distribution, used crutches as transportation, were carried on the backs of their caretakers, and some even made make-shift wheelchairs that were falling apart piece-by-piece.

We saw so many children suffering due to lack of proper nutrition during pregnancy, excess fluoride in the water, AIDS, unsafe food and water, and poor prenatal care.

One of the most heartwarming experiences happened at our first distribution in Arusha. I had just placed an 8-year-old boy who had been paralyzed his entire life, into a wheelchair. When I asked the young girl next to him if she was his sister, she spoke English and told me she had been practicing so that she could thank us properly. She took hold of both of my hands, and with tears in her eyes as she looked at me, said, “He is my best friend. We are best friends. We dreamed of the day that he could have his own wheelchair. I pushed him 35 miles for this. He is my best friend and now he is free to play on his own.” You can bet I lost it at that moment.



One of the most incredible things I noticed in Africa was the immense sense of family and love that Africans have for one another. At these wheelchair distributions, you see family members who have taken care of their disabled loved-one wheelchair recipients, for years, sometimes even decades. At the Monduli Rehab Centre, I met a recipient who was 104-years-old. She has been taken care of by her son for over 40 years. Her son said, “The government doesn’t provide healthcare and hospitals refused to give her a wheelchair because they didn’t believe it was necessary.”

Thank you again to every single person who donated, helped me raise the money, and encouraged me on this mission over the last few years.



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