

Changing THE WORLD

■ SPRING 2004



CHANGING LIVES IN VIETNAM.

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impact of mobility in Southeast Asia

"The Wheelchair Foundation is here this morning to provide hope, mobility and freedom. Vietnam has suffered from decades of war and economic problems, and there are at least 100,000 people here without mobility. Let me tell you about a 17-year-old girl named Nghia. Six months ago, this beautiful and charming girl had to be carried everywhere she went by her father and mother. She was disabled by polio and had no money for a wheelchair. Last March when we were here, we gave Nghia a new wheelchair. Yesterday, I spent two hours having tea and visiting with her family. Nghia now wheels herself to school and to the market, and goes outside to be with her friends. She is studying English and math and wants to be a doctor. She is an inspiration to us all. We are blessed to be able to help more than 10,000 people a month around the world that are in the same situation as Nghia. These wheelchairs are a small token of friendship from our country to yours, and all we ask of you in return is a smile."

—Excerpt from a speech by Wheelchair Foundation President David Behring in Hanoi, Vietnam

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A MESSAGE FROM KEN BEHRING



We are learning so much every day from the people receiving our wheelchairs. When a woman tells us that the mobility we are providing is like “a pair of warm hands from across the ocean,” or a 13-year-old girl says her wheelchair is “a beam of sunshine that warms my heart,” these are words that make all of our efforts so satisfying. Meeting people who have only dreamed of mobility gives us a great perspective on the importance of our work, when we can make their dreams come true.

In the course of personally meeting the recipients of our wheelchairs, I have been thanked, embraced and blessed thousands of times over by people throughout the world who have never had much of a life without a wheelchair. This is the most wonderful feeling to me, and I encourage everyone to participate in this humanitarian effort of delivering a tangible, life-changing wheelchair that can provide instant independence and dignity to another human being. We have heard so many stories about children who are now going to school, adults having jobs and being able to care for their families and the elderly who can attend worship services or just go outside for the first time in years.

I must thank the thousands of individuals, groups and organizations that are helping us get our message out. A wheelchair does immediately change the life of a person that might otherwise be discarded by society. These efforts have contributed to a global awareness about the abilities and needs of people with physical disabilities, and the wonderful experience of actually giving a person their own new wheelchair.

One of the most touching experiences when delivering wheelchairs is having a person realize that someone does care about them. I look forward to shaking the hands of every recipient when I attend a wheelchair distribution because I receive a gift of joy equal to theirs. I feel the barriers of language and culture disappear when I look into their eyes and see their lives changed and their dreams becoming reality. I sincerely believe that this type of connection between people creates the kind of trust and friendship that can eliminate conflicts between cultures and societies.

Thank you for joining me in our mission of peace and friendship.

Kenneth E. Behring
Founder & Chairman of the Board

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

Over the next five years, the Wheelchair Foundation aims to deliver 1 million 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 tens 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 their 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.



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www.wheelchairfoundation.org

THE OVERWHELMING NEED FOR WHEELCHAIRS

- People require the use of a wheelchair for many reasons: accidents, birth defects, war injuries, debilitating diseases and advanced age.
- One of the most horrific causes of disability worldwide can be attributed to landmines or unexploded ordnance (UXO). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), every year, more than 29,000 people are injured by landmines or UXO around the world. This number does not include those that are killed by the explosions.
- An estimated 100–150 million disabled people worldwide need wheelchairs, though less than 1 percent own or have access to one. The number of physically disabled is likely underestimated, due to the difficulty in accounting for “forgotten” citizens who spend their lives hidden from sight.
- It is estimated that the number of people who need wheelchairs will increase by 22 percent over the next 10 years, with the greatest need existing in developing countries.
- In developing countries, only a small percentage of those who need wheelchairs have them, forcing dependence upon family and friends to get around. For others, the only way to get around is to crawl, or lie in a bed or corner of a room for years at a time.
- Despite tremendous efforts of many relief organizations, they are still not sufficient to meet the overwhelming need. Traditionally there have been three wheelchair delivery options—sadly, none of which is adequate for a country’s poorest disabled citizens:
 - >> Wheelchairs available in the West: The most basic durable wheelchair with similar features to the type we deliver costs from \$375 to \$500, not including shipping charges. This sum is out of reach for most disabled people in developing countries. In Vietnam, for example, a disabled person may earn about \$30 a month—if she or he is able to work.
 - >> Refurbished wheelchairs: There are several organizations that refurbish and distribute wheelchairs very professionally and responsibly. Unfortunately, their efforts cannot hope to meet the overwhelming need.
 - >> Wheelchairs manufactured in country: Some developing countries have domestic wheelchair manufacturing operations. But the wheelchairs still must be sold to disabled citizens and are almost always too expensive for the destitute.
- *The wheelchairs provided by the Wheelchair Foundation are purchased in bulk from Chinese manufacturers, and designed to be the best possible solution in developing countries. They cost \$150 each, delivered by a 280-wheelchair container, and are offered free to those most in need. Each donation of \$75 will be matched by the Wheelchair Foundation, with funds provided specifically for that purpose, to deliver a wheelchair. \$21,000 will deliver an entire 280-wheelchair container.*

Kenneth E. Behring

The establishment of the Wheelchair Foundation marks the most recent chapter in Kenneth E. Behring’s philanthropic efforts to improve the lives of disadvantaged people around the world.

From his successful career as an automobile dealer in Wisconsin, Ken entered the world of real-estate development in the 1960s. Over the course of the next 35 years, his companies created numerous planned communities in Florida and California, including the world-renowned Blackhawk development near San Francisco.

After purchasing the Seattle Seahawks football team in 1988, Ken established the Seattle Seahawks Charitable Foundation, which benefited numerous children’s charities. The Seahawks Foundation was the most substantial donor to the Western Washington Muscular Dystrophy Association for many years.

Ken Behring founded the Blackhawk Museum and the Behring-Hofmann Educational Institute in Blackhawk, California, to benefit the San Francisco East Bay region. In 1997, he pledged \$20 million to the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History, and in 2000, he pledged an additional \$80

“When I see the happiness in the eyes of the people who get a wheelchair, I feel that this is the greatest thing I have ever achieved in my life.” —Kenneth E. Behring

million to rebuild the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History. For only the fourth time in the Smithsonian’s 170-year history, the prestigious James Smithson Award was bestowed on Behring in recognition of his generosity and vision. The Blackhawk Museum is now an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution and hosts Smithsonian exhibits.

During his years of travel around the world, Ken has made it his personal mission to help those in need. His donations of food, medical supplies, clothing, toys and educational materials have helped people in some of the most impoverished nations on earth. His first-hand involvement has given him a realistic picture of how much help is needed worldwide.

In 1999, Ken donated shipments of wheelchairs to relief organizations in Eastern Europe and Africa. His personal contact with the recipients gave him a greater understanding of how much hope and happiness can be given to a person who receives a wheelchair. In the following months, he traveled the world delivering wheelchairs to numerous countries. On June 13, 2000 (his birthday), the Wheelchair Foundation was established at a ceremony in Washington, DC.

Since June of 2000, Ken has tirelessly traveled the world delivering tens of thousands of wheelchairs to the disabled citizens of five continents. The relationships he has developed with world leaders have led to a greater awareness of the needs and abilities of the physically disabled, and are a great force in propelling the mission of the Wheelchair Foundation. In 2002, Ken was awarded an honorary doctorate by Brigham Young University for his worldwide charitable efforts.

Ken and Patricia, his wife of 54 years, reside in Blackhawk, California. They have five sons and ten grandchildren.



international board of advisors

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WHEELCHAIRS COMMITTED OR DELIVERED SINCE JUNE 2000

Afghanistan	5,890	Laos	780
Albania	550	Latvia	240
Algeria	640	Lebanon	1,749
Angola	3,240	Macedonia	500
Argentina	1,971	Madagascar	500
Armenia	2,124	Malawi	1,920
Bahamas	640	Malaysia	1,980
Bangladesh	240	Malta	240
Belarus	490	Mexico	28,733
Belgium	280	Micronesia	500
Belize	800	Moldova	480
Bolivia	2,294	Mongolia	540
Bosnia & Herzegovina	1,010	Montenegro	120
Botswana	350	Morocco	240
Brazil	1,815	Mozambique	600
Bulgaria	250	Nepal	1,226
Burundi	240	Nicaragua	2,135
Cambodia	780	Niger	240
Cape Verde	726	Nigeria	780
Central African Republic	240	Pakistan	655
Chile	1,940	Palestinians/Israel	1,965
China/Tibet	41,893	Panama	3,120
Colombia	890	Papua New Guinea	740
Costa Rica	3,888	Paraguay	784
Croatia	490	Peru	3,589
Cuba	1,000	Philippines	1,510
Czech Republic	600	Poland	291
Dominican Republic	5,272	Puerto Rico	250
Ecuador	2,809	Romania	1,090
Egypt	808	Russia	700
El Salvador	3,336	Rwanda	5
Eritrea	250	Saint Lucia (UK)	280
Estonia	250	Samoa	1,171
Ethiopia	1,888	Senegal	240
French Polynesia	280	Serbia	250
Georgia	250	Sierra Leone	1,000
Ghana	1,220	Somalia	88
Greece	240	South Africa	2,460
Guam	250	Spain	775
Guatemala	3,476	Sri Lanka	240
Haiti	1,091	Sudan	200
Holy See (Vatican City)	1,000	Swaziland	240
Honduras	2,784	Syria	88
Hungary	120	Taiwan	756
India	3,436	Tajikistan	240
Indonesia	1,020	Tanzania	568
Iran	2,160	Thailand	2,770
Iraq	840	Tonga	500
Israel	4,290	Trinidad & Tobago	1,320
Italy	1,018	Turkey	1,520
Jamaica	1,500	Turkmenistan	240
Japan	750	Uganda	1,784
Jordan	1,200	Ukraine	2,797
Kazakhstan	730	United States	16,219
Kenya	1,760	Uzbekistan	990
Korea, North	240	Venezuela	885
Korea, South	4,120	Vietnam	2,779
Kosovo	1,080	Virgin Islands (US)	280
Kyrgyzstan	490	Western Sahara	153
		Zambia	120
		Zimbabwe	990

TOTAL COUNTRIES 120
 TOTAL WHEELCHAIRS 225,614

For current totals visit wheelchairfoundation.org.



GIRLS IN ANGOLA WALK MILES EACH DAY TO HELP THEIR FAMILIES MAKE ENDS MEET.

BAGHDAD, IRAQ: DECEMBER 16, 2003—The first container of 280 wheelchairs from the Wheelchair Foundation was received by the Life for Relief & Development agency working in partnership with the newly established Iraqi Handicapped Society. This shipment was sponsored by Rotary Clubs in the U.S. and Canada, and was transported by the U.S. Department of Defense. Wheelchairs were distributed to disabled Iraqis in Baghdad, Karbala and Tikrit, and the delivery represents the first of four containers sponsored by Rotarians currently en route to Iraq. It is estimated that there are nearly 7 million landmines separating the Kurdish North from Southern Iraq, and the numbers of people being injured by landmines in this region are some of the highest in the world.

KABUL, AFGHANISTAN: JANUARY 2004—The distribution continues in 20 provinces throughout Afghanistan. Five thousand wheelchairs sponsored by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Knights of Columbus have been changing lives in Baghlan, Bamyan, Kandahar, Ghor and Takhar, to name a few. It is estimated that nearly 10–15 percent of the population of Afghanistan have been injured by landmines or unexploded ordnance, and the delivery of these

wheelchairs is making life livable for children and adults without mobility. In taking a step back to evaluate the message of peace and friendship that is evidenced by this gesture of giving, we must applaud LDS Charities and the Knights of Columbus who have no agenda except to change the lives of our fellow human beings. The cultural, religious, tribal and language barriers may never allow the recipients to know who has made these lifesaving wheelchairs available to them. But the impact of making a better life for a person who suffers through daily existence, is a gift that is being given with selfless inspiration.



NOW THIS BOY FROM ST. LUCIA CAN GO TO SCHOOL.

PRESCOTT, ARIZONA: DECEMBER 2003—Joanne and Jeff Robertson, owners of Big Picture Video Productions, were once again honored by the international Telly Awards for an outstanding video production. Big Picture has created all of the videos showcasing the work of the Wheelchair Foundation since its inception in June of 2000, taking Jeff and his camera to over 60 countries. To celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Telly Awards, there was a special one-time competition, the “Classic Telly,” honoring TV commercials, film and video of timeless quality—the best work of the past 25 years. There were thousands of entries for this award competition representing all 50 states and many countries around the world. Big

Picture was awarded the “Classic Telly” for the Wheelchair Foundation video “Lending a Hand in Papua New Guinea.” The Wheelchair Foundation congratulates Joanne and Jeff, and thanks them for their valuable contributions to our worldwide mission. All of the Wheelchair Foundation videos can be viewed on our website at www.wheelchairfoundation.org.



TODAY STARTS A NEW LIFE.

BEIJING, CHINA: JANUARY 2004—In our continuing effort to help the nearly 35 million people with physical disabilities in China that are in need of a wheelchair but cannot afford one, Wheelchair Foundation Founder Ken Behring and the Civil Affairs Ministry in Beijing have signed a cooperative agreement that will provide for the distribution of 50,000 wheelchairs in the Beijing area over the next five years. Similar agreements have been initiated in Shanghai, Guang Zhou and numerous other provinces throughout China. Since September 2001, the China Disabled Person’s Federation has been instrumental in assisting the Wheelchair Foundation in our efforts throughout China to get wheelchairs into the hands of citizens that are without mobility or the means to acquire a wheelchair. Thousands of stories are now being told of children going to school, adults going to work and providing for their families and the elderly once again being able to rejoin society or just go outside after years of being bedridden.

sharing the sunshine in China



TOP: MEETING EACH RECIPIENT OF A NEW WHEELCHAIR. CENTER: MR. BEHRING IS WELCOMED TO HARBIN. BOTTOM: ZHOU LI READING A MESSAGE TO MR. BEHRING.



During Ken Behring's most recent visit to China in January 2004, he participated in wheelchair distributions in several provinces. One particularly touching moment happened on January 7 when Zhou Li, a representative of the Harbin Daowai District Disabled Persons Association, read the following message after receiving her new wheelchair.

Dear Friends and Guests,

I am so honored and excited to be here. On behalf of all the people who have received a wheelchair from the Wheelchair Foundation, we offer our sincere thanks to Mr. Behring, his Foundation team and to all the friends who have offered your warm hands to us—thank you!

We are a special group of people in society. Disasters and diseases have deprived us of walking. We cannot walk nor live as normal people do. Our physical disabilities bring us unimaginable difficulties in daily life, as well as great mental pain. But deep in our hearts, we are longing to live life as healthy and sound human beings! We dream that some day we can walk, we can move ourselves to go outdoors, to have a look at the beauty of nature and our beautiful city; to witness the magnificent progress our country is making; and to say hello to the fast-changing world. ... Today our dreams are coming true! Thank you so much for bringing us the ability to realize our dreams, to achieve our mobility with the help of a wheelchair. This is such a wonderful experience for us, especially for those who have never walked or moved by themselves since the day they were born! We feel the warmth and strength offered by a pair of warm hands from across the ocean, we feel the love and friendship coming from a worldwide family. We are so thankful and full of confidence! As disabled people, we can only hope to grow stronger, to break through the difficulties of life, and try to greet every day with a smiling face!

Thank you Mr. Behring and the Wheelchair Foundation, you are messengers of worldwide love and friendship!

At the same distribution, Mr. Behring met a 13-year-old girl named Chengxin, who shared her story with several Wheelchair Foundation China team members.

Chengxin is a lovely 13-year-old girl with a smiling face. She contracted polio early in life and has no use of her legs. She has a colorful dream for her life—about enjoying mobility in nature. This dream came true when she received a brand new wheelchair. In her excitement she told us, “My father used to carry me to school every day on his back. As I grew heavier, I worried about him. Now I don’t need to worry, I can even go out to enjoy a long walk with my parents.” She continued, “The greatest thing is that I can now move anytime I want, and I don’t need to stay in the classroom all day long. With the help of my friends, I can now go outside to enjoy my break time like they do. I will never forget Mr. Behring, he is just like my grandfather,” she said with tears, “and I have a dream. I want to study very hard, and when I grow up, I want to do the same kind of things for other disabled people like Mr. Behring has done for me. This wheelchair is not only a chair, it is a beam of sunshine that warms my heart, and I want to share the sunshine with many people.” Her final words were, “All children like me can help themselves by believing in our abilities, not our disabilities!”

You can help us get wheelchairs to the disabled in China!

It is estimated that up to 35 million Chinese citizens are without mobility or the funds necessary to purchase a basic mobility wheelchair. It is the goal of the Wheelchair Foundation to educate American companies operating in China about the need for wheelchairs, and of the public relations value of sponsoring many thousands of wheelchairs that have their company logo stitched on the back of each one. \$21,000 sponsors a 280-wheelchair container anywhere in China.

PLEASE HELP US SPREAD THE WORD!



angels come in many forms



On the Caribbean island of St. Lucia, located several hundred miles south and west of Puerto Rico, 280 physically disabled people are the proud owners of brand-new wheelchairs. They would not be wrong in thinking that their good fortune is an answer to a prayer.

It's also the answer to an e-mail.

Sue Cook, the 2002–2003 Governor of Canada's Rotary District 7010, is an occupational therapist with a personal interest in mobility. While in San Antonio at the Rotary International convention in 2001, she heard founder Ken Behring speak about the Wheelchair Foundation. She was instantly intrigued.

The Wheelchair Foundation was a perfect fit for two of Cook's leadership goals: (1) Make it easy for Rotarians to get involved in an international service project and (2) Choose a project that allowed hands-on experience and direct involvement with the people who would benefit.

Cook returned to Canada, spread the Wheelchair Foundation message in District 7010—which covers 44 Rotary clubs in the provinces of Ontario and Quebec—and was rewarded with tears, excitement and eagerness. She'd found a receptive audience.

Clubs in District 7010 took up the cause and, with a matching grant from the Rotary Foundation, raised the money for four containers of wheelchairs. South Korea, Uganda and Trinidad all received one container each. The fourth and final container, and its 280 wheelchairs, still needed a destination.

Fortunately for the disabled residents of St. Lucia, Marcus Day believes in answering his e-mails.

Back in Canada, Cook was sending out inquiries to Rotary clubs in various Caribbean countries, explaining the Wheelchair Foundation program and asking who might be interested in receiving the 280 wheelchairs. The only response to Cook's e-mails was from Day, the director of Community Service for the 52-member Rotary Club of St. Lucia.

In November 2003, the container of wheelchairs arrived in St. Lucia. Soon to follow were 43 District 7010 Rotarians—who also brought along clothing and toys for orphanages and supplies for St. Lucia schools. The wheelchairs had a home, and Rotarians and the Wheelchair Foundation had a lot of new friends. Here's what

Cook and Day had to say about the experience:

Marcus Day: "In the Caribbean, we have a tendency to hide our disabled people. We started with a list of 150 to 160 names, but as we went out and proactively searched for the disabled, we more than doubled the list. It showed me that ... hundreds of disabled people fall through the cracks."

Sue Cook: "We went to a Seventh Day Adventist Church



and there was a disabled person sitting on the floor at the front. She was carried to the entrance of the church and put in a wheelchair—and she wheeled herself down the center aisle.

Everyone started singing and dancing. The Rotarians who witnessed this first hand couldn't talk about it for two days. It was a very emotional experience."



Marcus Day: The great thing about a wheelchair distribution is that it gets the entire community involved. We went to a couple of rough

neighborhoods and I was amazed at how well we were received. This big guy in one neighborhood told people in the area, 'Leave them alone. They're delivering wheelchairs.' This was a wonderful demonstration of a country coming together."

Sue Cook: "The people in St. Lucia have very strong family ties. It is part of their culture to take care of the family. One mother had carried her daughter around for 13 years. The great thing about a wheelchair project like this is the immediate rewards."

Marcus Day: "There was a boy who had to go to school in a wheelbarrow. When we arrived with his wheelchair, the teacher stopped the class. We gave the boy his brand-new wheelchair and his mates on the playground took him and started doing laps. He was reveling in the attention he was given that special day."

Sue Cook: "The residents here are a very religious people. Materially they would be considered poor, but spiritually they are very rich. It was hard for them to believe that they would be receiving a free wheelchair—it was considered a miracle. One wheelchair recipient said, 'Angels come in many forms.'"

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: ROTARIANS FROM DISTRICT 7010 IN ST. LUCIA; THE WELCOMING COMMITTEE; NOW HE CAN LEAVE HIS HOUSE; LYNN STRICKLAND AND DISTRICT GOVERNOR CARL DICKSON CHANGING A LIFE IN ST. LUCIA.

season highlights



ABOVE: >>> Landmines are a part of everyday life in many countries. BELOW LEFT: >>> Rotarian Phil Toohey delivers wheelchairs in Nepal. BELOW RIGHT: >>> Contra Costa Professional Firefighters and Catholic Charities deliver wheelchairs sponsored by Wells Fargo Bank.





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: >>> She and her brother can now play together outside. >>> Sons and daughters of Rotarians help deliver wheelchairs. >>> Celebration in Cape Town. >>> Her first independence. >>> Patricia Behring making friends in South Africa. >>> First Lady of New York Libby Pataki with then-Yankee second baseman Alfonso Soriano at an event to benefit the residents of the Dominican Republic. >>> School and independence are now in her future.





impact of mobility in Southeast Asia

A sweeping five-nation Southeast Asia distribution tour near the end of 2003 left no doubt that the Wheelchair Foundation's mission continues to gain momentum as one of the world's brightest beacons, shining a message of hope into some of the world's most distant corners.

The social and human impact of the 18-day mission was tremendous. "Because of my new wheelchair," said a well-educated man disabled by Parkinson's disease, "I will be able to help humanity."

The wheelchair distribution began October 26 in Cambodia, included stops in Thailand, Laos and Vietnam, and ended November 13 in Nepal. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Rotary Clubs in Washington state, and the VNHelp organization sponsored the wheelchairs.

"We have had wonderful wheelchair distributions," said Gary Winters, manager of Major Initiatives for LDS Charities, who made the trip. "I think that we made a lot of friends for the Church and for the Wheelchair Foundation."

"We gave wheelchairs to polio victims and accident victims. ... This was their first wheelchair. It will make a great difference in their lives, not only for themselves but for their families."

One of the guiding principles under which the Latter-day Saints Charities operates, and one which is shared by the Wheelchair Foundation, is that it is a blessing to be able to assist others—as it is a blessing for those who have been assisted to turn around and help someone else.

"We are very pleased to help introduce the Vietnamese culture to our new friends at the Wheelchair Foundation," said Thu Do, executive director of VNHelp. "We are delivering 1,500 wheelchairs to Vietnam, but that is just the beginning of our collaboration to help as many of the physically disabled throughout the country as possible."

Improving Lives—One Wheelchair at a Time

"Take a young man that is physically disabled," said Winters. "You give him a wheelchair and he becomes self-reliant. He goes to school and receives an education. Once he has the education, he can give to others either by donation or by teaching the skills he has learned. We all need to have ... somebody to lead the way, to set an example. One who inspires someone else to go and do the same.

"Giving someone a wheelchair is a way of healing that person. Making the physically disabled mobile is like giving them a new life," said Winters. "It sets them free."

Today in Southeast Asia, many people are experiencing the sheer pleasure of freedom for the very first time. Vulng Sihung, an 18-year-old, and Noc Tu, a 20-year-old, have both been disabled since birth. And both received their first taste of mobility—and of freedom—courtesy of the Wheelchair Foundation and its partners.

“Before the wheelchair, I would sit alone in one place,” said Vulng Sihung. “I couldn’t do anything. I stayed at home all day in a chair in a very small house. There is no one to help me to go to school, so I never went.”

“Now, with the wheelchair, I will be able to go where I want to go.” On the way, he may cross paths with Noc Tu, who said that she, too, is “going to go to school.”

Noc Tu’s father was equally thrilled when his daughter received her free wheelchair. “She cannot move on her own,” said Dad. “All she could do was sit by herself until she was 10 years old. She was then able to stand by age 12 ... but is still unable to walk.”

“I’m very happy and touched that my child received a wheelchair. On behalf of wheelchair recipients, I’d like to thank the LDS Church and the Wheelchair Foundation. ... I don’t know what to say but thank you.”

That “thank you” was more than sufficient. The Wheelchair Foundation and its many distribution partners worldwide—including the Hanoi Women’s Union, the Red Cross in Cambodia, the Foundation for the Welfare of the Crippled in Thailand and the National Rehabilitation Center in Laos—are just pleased that they can help.

Taking a Family Approach

In a speech at a Hanoi distribution, Elder Lorin Brown, the Asia Area Welfare Agent for the LDS Church, said that 11 million members of the Church contribute funds so that LDS Charities can participate in projects like a wheelchair distribution that help make people self-sufficient. Gary Winters later explained that the Charities’ logo depicts a family, because “we want to help families be more stable.”

A 39-year-old former construction worker needs no convincing that this commitment is real. While out chopping coconuts from a palm tree, the married father of two fell and injured his spinal cord, and was left paralyzed from the waist down. His wife worked while he was stuck at home, trying to help with their 12-year-old son and 5-year-old daughter even though he was only able to move around “very slowly.” There was no money for a wheelchair and no possibility of receiving one, until the Wheelchair Foundation showed up.

“I am very happy to have this wheelchair,” he said. “My wife goes to work every day. Now, with the wheelchair, I will be able to look after the house. Thank you very much.”

In offering his personal thanks, this gentleman was actually speaking for hundreds of other Southeast Asians who have been disabled by injury or disease, but have discovered the freedom and mobility a new wheelchair can offer. In many cases, a wheelchair allows the recipient to increase their wage-earning ability, or free the spouse to do



“We really appreciate the warm hearts from LDS Charities and the Rotarians. I think that there are over 100,000 people in Hanoi that need a wheelchair. By receiving a wheelchair, recipients will now feel integrated into society. This warms my heart.”

—Phan Haoi Giang
Director of International Relations,
Hanoi Women’s Union

so, to the point that they will never be mired in poverty again.

Much remains to be done, however. Tens of thousands of people in this part of the world remain immobile, and are forced to carry the heavy weight of that reality every day of their lives.

But there is hope. Each day as the sun rises over Southeast Asia, it is greeted by a growing number of smiling faces—the faces of those who have received a new wheelchair from the Wheelchair Foundation and its worldwide network of dedicated partners, and those that know our commitment will keep us coming back to bring as many wheelchairs as possible into the lives of those in need.



OPPOSITE PAGE: >>> Rotarian Dick Knight witnessing “first mobility.” THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: >>> Rotarian Son Michael Pham in Hanoi. >>> LDS church official Kathleen Hughes enjoys the hands-on mission in Thailand. >>> A wheelchair changes lives of entire families. >>> Tran Thi Nghia and David Behring in Hanoi. >>> A 5-year-old polio victim in Vietnam gets a wheelchair from Thu Do and Toan Tran of VNHelp.

hope for the hopeless



Angola is one of the world's most poverty-stricken countries after many years of civil war, and has the dubious honor of having the most physically disabled population on earth. Unemployment runs 50 percent or higher and mobility can mean more than being able to go outside or advance in society. It can mean the difference between life and death.

ChevronTexaco and Rotary District 5810 from the Dallas, Texas, area joined forces with the Wheelchair Foundation in 2003 to sponsor 960 wheelchairs for this West African nation. The joy and the appreciation of the recipients were "overwhelming."

Daniel, age 7: A polio victim, Daniel was never able to get around on his own before receiving his new wheelchair. Now, for the first time in his young life, Daniel is mobile. He is looking forward to going to school next year, and is thrilled to finally be able to get out and visit and play with his friends—instead of spending day after day staying home alone.

In years past, wheelchairs destined for Angola were all distributed in and around Luanda, the country's major port city. On this trip, they were spread among seven different provinces. Helping with the distribution were Oran Bain, International Service Director for Rotary District 5810, and the Wheelchair Foundation's Joel Hodge.

"There are 4,000 people on the waiting list in the province of Kwanza Sul that are in need of a wheelchair, and thus far we've given 80 wheelchairs to them," said Bain. "We need to get some more wheel-

chairs to these people ... we need to help them as much as we can, especially because of the high number of polio victims that the vaccine is too late to help."

Bain, who has traveled to six other African nations, calls Angola "the most depressed country I've ever seen." Nearly 20 percent of the residents are disabled and/or immobile, and diseases that have long been eradicated in developed countries still take a heavy toll. Landmines and unexploded ordnance also ravage significant numbers of Angolans.

Segunda, age 4: This young girl's family was living with double trouble. Segunda is disabled due to polio, but her father can't do much to help her get around because 14 years ago he lost the use of both legs when his vehicle hit a landmine. The family received two free wheelchairs and, needless to say, daughter and father were "very, very thankful" for the new life that mobility would bring to them.

While distributing new wheelchairs and following up on recipients from past distributions, Bain and Hodge visited the Funda Center for Rehabilitation, a leper colony. The residents are virtual outcasts. Opportunity for a better life is a dream. And the disease itself causes circulatory problems in the extremities, so many in the camp don't

have hands and feet that work, or don't have hands and feet at all. Life at the center was about as bleak as life can get—until a shipment of wheelchairs was delivered in 2002.

Nevis: "I couldn't walk because my legs are not well enough to move. The wheelchair helps me a lot. ... Now I can go to the river to take a shower, I can go to the kitchen to pick up food and I can go and visit my neighbors. The wheelchair is helping me to survive."

Joseph: This young man, who has had leprosy for nine years, lost a leg to the disease. "Before the wheelchair, I used some sticks to get around with great difficulty," he said. "The wheelchair has helped me. The wheelchair is very strong. ... I'm so happy to have one."

Bain found that most people in Angola are just glad to be alive—so it's no stretch to imagine the extreme happiness a disabled person in this impoverished country might feel when he



or she receives a new wheelchair. One of the hardest things for them to reconcile in their own minds is that someone thinks they are of enough value to receive a free wheelchair, when their life has often been spent as an outcast. The gestures of thanks that follow the gift are treasures for the soul.

For immobile Angolans, the Wheelchair Foundation and partners like ChevronTexaco and Rotary District 5810 may represent their only opportunity for hope and freedom. Purchasing a wheelchair is simply not an

option for the vast majority of people who need one. Those who have received a free wheelchair keep them in good shape, as that wheelchair is both a source of transportation and perhaps the one positive in their lives.

"We visited the home of a young man who is 33 years old and had spinal meningitis when he was 2 years old," recalled Bain. "He is very bright and has a very good nature ... but he lost all of his hearing, his sense of speech and all response from his lower extremities. With his wheelchair he can be mobile and have some dignity—he no longer has to crawl on the ground."

Mobility, in Angola, means being able to find work and provide for a family or going to school and maybe a brighter future. Mobility means not having to crawl or be dependent on friends and family for survival. Simply being able to sit up and look people in the eye rather than lying face down all day is a success, and if Angola teaches you nothing else, it teaches you to approach the concept of success with a much different frame of mind.

"When you see the gratitude on the faces of the wheelchair recipients, you understand how meaningful this contribution is to them," said Jim Blackwell, managing director of the Southern Africa Business Unit of ChevronTexaco. "We're pleased to participate in this life-changing program." This is ChevronTexaco's third sponsorship of wheelchairs in the past four years and is part of the company's initiative to partner with communities around the globe where it conducts business.

The Wheelchair Foundation is grateful to ChevronTexaco for not only helping to sponsor the wheelchairs that will improve the lives of people in Angola, but for the active participation in helping to import and then distribute the wheelchairs in conjunction with Angolan First Lady Ana Paula dos Santos and her Lwini Fund for Social Solidarity. Lwini representatives have reported, "We can see the enormous change in



the lives of the people that received the wheelchairs you brought here in 2001, 2002 and now in 2003. They are better able to take care of themselves, and stand a better chance of surviving in this very difficult society. They have nicer clothes, they go to work and there is more food and water in their homes. This is more than they ever could have prayed to receive."

In Angola, a wheelchair is a very big deal. And many, many more wheelchairs are needed.



OPPOSITE PAGE: >>> Visitors witness very simple ways of living in villages. THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: >>> New horizons emerge with each wheelchair. >>> Every day challenges of life before his new wheelchair. >>> Community water well for thousands of Angolans. >>> Rotarian Oran Bain changing a life in Luanda. >>> New mobility is a cause for great celebration.

million dollar moments: Jamaica

The association is called the Million Dollar Round Table (MDRT), and its members are among the world's most successful life insurance and financial services professionals. A group of 31 people affiliated with the MDRT and its philanthropic arm, the MDRT Foundation, enjoyed a different kind of success in December.

They put "million dollar" smiles on the faces of 560 physically disabled and/or immobile residents of Jamaica.

In June 2003, Wheelchair Foundation founder Ken Behring spoke at the Million Dollar Round Table's annual conference, stressing the worldwide need for wheelchairs and the hope, mobility and freedom a new wheelchair offers someone who, to that point, had little hope, if any.

Ken's message was well received, and six months later the Wheelchair Foundation and the MDRT Foundation were sponsoring two containers of wheelchairs—560 wheelchairs in all—for delivery in Jamaica.

The first distribution was held in Kingston, where free wheelchairs were presented to some 350 deserving people. John Junor, Jamaica's Minister of Health, was present for the ceremony, and joined Wheelchair Foundation representative Jeff Behring, MDRT President George Pickett and MDRT Foundation President John Marshall Lee in addressing the crowd.

The following day a second distribution was held in Montego Bay, a town about one-tenth

the size of Kingston. Accordingly, the number of wheelchair recipients was much smaller—but not the enthusiasm and the appreciation they showed.

Following the Montego Bay distribution, MDRT President George Pickett said, "We still had about 15 of the smallest wheelchairs for children. At this point, our trip took a surprise turn."



ABOVE: NOW HE CAN GO OUTSIDE WITH HIS FRIENDS. BELOW: MILLION DOLLAR ROUND TABLE PRESIDENT GEORGE PICKETT AND JEFF BEHRING CHANGE LIVES IN KINGSTON.



A husband and wife on the distribution team had been in Montego Bay previously, volunteering at a local orphanage. A local minister with whom the couple had worked was also present, and it didn't take long to decide that the orphanage would be a perfect place to distribute these 15 small wheelchairs.

On the way, the team stopped at a toy store to buy at least one toy for each of the 80 or so orphans who lived at the facility.

"When we arrived," said Pickett, "none of us were prepared for the experience. These were children, mostly ages 1 to 15, with serious disabilities and birth defects. While we brought toys and wheelchairs, the children were more interested in receiving hugs and some personal contact from us. The impact of our presence was so dramatic because we were just there to let the children know that someone cares about them."

"This trip had a huge impact on everyone involved," said Pickett. "The Wheelchair Foundation delivers a wonderful gift to those in need, and we are very proud to be involved in this worldwide mission."

SPECIAL THANKS

The Wheelchair Foundation wishes to give special recognition to the people and organizations that have helped make our mission so successful. As we deliver 10,000 wheelchairs per month around the world, lives are changed for entire families, and the messages of peace, friendship and unselfish giving to others is having an impact on the world in which we live.

[The United States Department of State](#)
[The United States Department of Defense](#)
[Rotary Clubs and Rotarians Worldwide](#)

[The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints](#)

[The China Disabled Person's Federation](#)

[Fondo Unido Rotario de Mexico](#)

[Smithsonian Magazine](#)

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[The Million Dollar Round Table Foundation](#)

[Crystal Cathedral Ministries](#)

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global team report



LEFT: DON AND JOHN WILLIAMS VISIT NEVADA GOVERNOR AND MRS. KENNY GUINN. RIGHT: FLORIDA GOVERNOR JEB BUSH WITH JACK DRURY.

Wheelchair Foundation Southeast

President Jack Drury reports increased participation by ethnic groups in South Florida to help the physically disabled in their home countries. The sponsorships of containers of wheelchairs to Ecuador, Venezuela, the Bahamas and Turkey are currently underway. Local foundations and Rotary Clubs have continued to expand their reach into the international service arena by utilizing the ongoing relief mission of the Wheelchair Foundation and our distribution partners in countries around the world.

Wheelchair Foundation Washington, D.C.

In a very close working relationship with the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Defense, the Wheelchair Foundation has spearheaded an initiative that will continue to bring lifesaving wheelchairs to physically disabled citizens in Afghanistan, Iraq and numerous other countries that are listed as having serious landmine and unexploded ordnance problems. The U.S. Department of State estimates that there are between 60 to 70 million landmines planted in up to 60 countries around the world, and the number of injuries due to these munitions is increasing on a yearly basis.

Wheelchair Foundation New York

As the traditional hub of numerous ethnic groups in the United States, the Wheelchair Foundation New York office is focusing its public education campaign on creating awareness of the needs and abilities of people with physical disabilities in countries such as Israel, the Dominican Republic and China. Events have been held to initiate the adoption of a country or region by specific groups of people, who then sponsor the shipment of wheelchairs to these destinations, and often travel to participate in their delivery.

Wheelchair Foundation Nevada

The state of Nevada will most likely be the first of the 50 states to completely eradicate immobility. A dedicated collaboration of individuals, groups, organizations and corporations has allowed the Wheelchair Foundation of Nevada to distribute over 1,300 wheelchairs statewide in the past two years. A generous gift from Ralph and Betty Engelstad will provide for enough wheelchairs to end immobility throughout Nevada.

Wheelchair Foundation Canada/La Fondation De Chaise Roulante Canada

Operating from the Vancouver area of British Columbia, Wheelchair Foundation Canada has established itself as one of the most popular international service projects of Rotary Clubs and Rotarians throughout the country. Local schools, civic groups and individuals have embraced the idea of Canadians doing their part to relieve the suffering of immobile people around the world, as well as of local residents who are in need of wheelchairs, but are without the funds necessary to acquire one. Canadians have sponsored wheelchairs to numerous locations in Africa, the Middle East and Latin America.

Wheelchair Foundation Australia

Founded in 2003 by members of the Rotary Club of Gosford West in New South Wales, Wheelchair Foundation Australia is working to coordinate the sponsorship and distribution of wheelchairs in the Australia and Western Pacific region as the international service project of their Rotary Club. Wheelchairs have been delivered to Papua New Guinea, and a project is currently under way to send a 280-wheelchair container to Samoa. Through the dedicated efforts of the volunteer directors and members, a great deal of awareness has been generated throughout Australia about the needs and abilities of people with physical disabilities in the Western Pacific.

Wheelchair Foundation China

In our continuing effort to help the nearly 35 million people with physical disabilities in China that are in need of a wheelchair but cannot afford one, Wheelchair Foundation Founder Ken Behring and the Civil Affairs Ministry in Beijing have recently signed a cooperative agreement that will provide for the distribution of 50,000 wheelchairs in the Beijing area over the next five years. Similar agreements have been initiated in Shanghai, Guang Zhou and numerous other provinces throughout China, in cooperation with the China Disabled Person's Federation.

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