

Changing THE WORLD



SUMMER 2020

A MESSAGE FROM DAVID BEHRING



Dear Friends,

In these uncertain and frightening times we hope and pray that this message finds you and your families safe and healthy. Wheelchair Foundation's offices are closed in alignment with local, State and Federal guidelines during the Covid-19 crisis. Our employees are still available to answer your questions and your emails, as well as process donations, manage logistics and, along with our global volunteers and partners, make sure that our wheelchairs are still getting delivered in domestically and in countries across the globe.

"Shelter in Place" and "Social Distancing" have become part of our shared 2020 experience. While the necessity for our social isolation should dissipate within the next 6 months, we know that social isolation is a way of life for many physically disabled people throughout the world. Unable to move about at their own free will, or able to do so with difficulty, and a feeling of being trapped within their environment, the plight of some of the world's disabled begins to seem familiar.

Our primary mission over the last two decades has been providing wheelchairs to those without access to them, and to create awareness about the needs and abilities of people with physical disabilities. My father, Ken Behring - Founder of Wheelchair Foundation, worked tirelessly to promote global friendship. Now, more than ever, we need the world's scientists, doctors, health experts and political leaders to work together in friendship to find solutions.

Please stay safe and be healthy! While we all isolate, social distance and shelter in place, take a moment to remember those who live lives in isolation every day. Thank you for your continuing support

David E. Behring
President

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
USA. Copyright 2020
Wheelchair Foundation.
All rights reserved.

Summer 2020 Issue.

Written and edited by:
Joel Hodge,
Program Director

Contributors: David
Behring, Charli Butterfield,
Jeff Juri, Joe Callaway, Gary
Pforr, Don Williams, John
Williams and Darren Cox.



Wheelchair
FOUNDATION

A Division of Behring Global Educational Foundation
Tax ID # 94-3353881

Contact Us:

Wheelchair Foundation (877) 378-3839

- info@wheelchairfoundation.org
- www.wheelchairfoundation.org
- www.bgefoundation.org
- jhodge@wheelchairfoundation.org

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.....	3,115	Mauritania.....	100
Bangladesh.....	350	Mexico.....	172,623
Barbados.....	1,750	Micronesia.....	1,265
Belarus.....	990	Moldova.....	1,720
Belgium.....	280	Mongolia.....	1,320
Belize.....	3,355	Montenegro.....	120
Benin.....	280	Morocco.....	5,470
Bolivia.....	6,124	Mozambique.....	1,660
Bosnia-Herzegovina.....	2,040	Myanmar (Burma).....	1,100
Botswana.....	1,688	Namibia.....	466
Brazil.....	2,305	Nepal.....	3,380
Bulgaria.....	530	Nicaragua.....	9,439
Burundi.....	520	Niger.....	240
Cambodia.....	3,840	Nigeria.....	1,420
Canada.....	560	Northern Mariana Islands.....	410
Cape Verde.....	780	Oman.....	280
Central African Republic.....	240	Pakistan.....	3,285
Chile.....	11,668	Palestinian Territories.....	1,906
China.....	458,628	Panama.....	15,780
Colombia.....	13,612	Papua New Guinea.....	2,180
Congo, The Democratic Republic of the.....	205	Paraguay.....	2,614
Costa Rica.....	9,883	Peru.....	14,357
Croatia.....	1,300	Philippines.....	11,345
Cuba.....	1,800	Poland.....	2,700
Cyprus.....	280	Portugal.....	990
Czech Republic.....	597	Puerto Rico.....	490
Dominica.....	280	Romania.....	3,851
Dominican Republic.....	9,063	Russia.....	2,230
East Timor.....	110	Rwanda.....	2,440
Ecuador.....	10,139	Saint Lucia.....	1,070
Egypt.....	1,168	Saint Petersburg.....	120
El Salvador.....	10,825	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.....	665
Eritrea.....	250	Samoa.....	1,360
Estonia.....	500	Saudi Arabia.....	20
Ethiopia.....	3,468	Senegal.....	630
Fiji.....	2,280	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.....	10,628	Sri Lanka.....	3,170
Guyana.....	250	Sudan.....	280
Haiti.....	5,420	Suriname.....	520
Honduras.....	8,034	Swaziland.....	1,970
Hungary.....	120	Syria.....	641
India.....	2,716	Tajikistan.....	480
Indonesia.....	3,340	Tanzania.....	4,258
Iran.....	3,880	Thailand.....	8,640
Iraq.....	4,300	Tonga.....	500
Israel.....	8,110	Trinidad & Tobago.....	5,980
Italy.....	580	Turkey.....	5,550
Jamaica.....	4,470	Turkmenistan.....	520
Japan.....	1,750	Uganda.....	10,704
Jordan.....	5,022	Ukraine.....	5,630
Kazakhstan.....	1,510	United States.....	37,889
Kenya.....	2,930	Uruguay.....	1,862
Kiribati.....	375	Uzbekistan.....	1,240
Korea, North.....	1,352	Vanuatu.....	250
Korea, South.....	5,700	Venezuela.....	3,260
Kosovo.....	1,300	Vietnam.....	14,936
Kyrgyzstan.....	1,500	Virgin Islands (UK).....	284
Laos.....	780	Virgin Islands (US).....	280
Latvia.....	740	Western Sahara.....	153
Lebanon.....	2,430	Zambia.....	2,646
Lesotho.....	1,060	Zimbabwe.....	3,080
Liberia.....	780		

TOTAL COUNTRIES AND REGIONS.....150+
TOTAL WHEELCHAIRS.....1,115,985

MS. WHEELCHAIR USA, MADELINE DELP AND HER FOUNDATION, LIVE BOUNDLESS, PROVIDE MOBILITY IN PHILIPPINES



In October of 2019, Madeline Delp, *Ms. Wheelchair USA 2017* and founder of *Live Boundless*, flew halfway across the world, from Asheville, North Carolina, USA, to the city of Manila, in the Philippines. Her team delivered 300 wheelchairs around the city and met people who impacted their lives more than expected.

Here is the story of a man that will forever remain in our hearts:

"All he could say after getting his wheelchair was, 'I'm so happy, I'm so happy' with tears streaming down his face. I wanted to show this picture because it's not staged...it's simply the true emotion of someone getting a new chance at life. For the past several years, his legs had become so weak that he was no longer able to walk. Stuck at home with no access to a wheelchair, he felt like his life was over. When we delivered his new chair, he told us that he felt like he had the chance to live again!"

PAT BEHRING AND MARTIN YAN TEAM UP TO HELP EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS



In February, Pat Behring hosted a fundraiser featuring Chef Martin Yan, from *"Yan Can Cook."* Three hundred wheelchairs are being donated in Yan's honor to areas recovering from the 2008 Sichuan earthquake and the 2013 Lushan earthquakes, and the recent February 2020 earthquake, which have left thousands of Chinese displaced and injured.

BACK TO VIETNAM

CONTRIBUTORS: DAVID BEHRING, JOE CALLAWAY AND GARY PFORR



Last October, a group of Wheelchair Foundation supporters traveled to Vietnam to distribute 500 wheelchairs across the country. This trip was the result of years of planning and fundraising. Among those traveling, seven Vietnam War Veterans from the *Vietnam Veterans of Diablo Valley*, returning to Vietnam for the first time since their tours of duty nearly 50 years ago.

We arrived in Saigon and hopped on a bus to our hotel. After some brief acclimation, our group traveled south to our first wheelchair distribution, in Vinh Long, in the center of the Mekong Delta. *VNHelp* organized our distributions in country with local partners. Thirty wheelchairs were allocated to local hospitals (*Vinh Long General Hospital, Vinh Long Medical Center* and others) for use as patient transport chairs. *Thien Tam Red Cross Association* of Saigon, along with *Disabled People Association* and the *Association for Orphans and Poor Patients* in Vinh Long, helped with recipient identification and transport.

VNHelp and *Light Dream Foundation* provided travel stipends to recipients and their family member, guardian or caretaker. Many recipients arrived by taxi, motorcycle, tricycle and hospital vehicle. Lunch and beverages were provided to all. *Thien Tam Red Cross Association* offered a carton of instant noodles and goodies to each attendee. Thirty student volunteers from *Vinh Long University of Technology Education* assembled and staged wheelchairs for our distribution.

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT: >>> Helen Duong, Joe Callaway, and Wheelchair Foundation President, David Behring, in Vinh Long, Vietnam with a NVA Veteran who had spent his entire life in the military. >>> A mother carries her daughter to receive a wheelchair in Vinh Long, Vietnam. >>> Recipients and their caregivers and families arrive on the morning of the wheelchair distribution. Many had traveled from far away to get a wheelchair. >>> Volunteer and longtime supporter, Jane Behring, with returning Veteran, Dennis Giacobelli, Vice President of the *Vietnam Veterans of Diablo Valley*, greet a young wheelchair recipient. >>> Among the 500 wheelchairs included in this distribution, *Kanga* seating and positioning systems were also distributed for kids with more involved seating needs. Wheelchair Foundation has delivered nearly 15,000 in Vietnam. >>>

We visited the Cai Rang floating market, took a boat ride on the Mekong River to see Cai Be floating fish market and the fruit market on An Binh Island. The following day we were back in Saigon, touring the museums and famous sites, Reunification Palace, The Opera House, and the Notre Dame Cathedral.

From Saigon, the group flew to Da Nang and toured the sites and spent the night. The next day we drove to Hoi An, an elegant former sea port town, known for a blend of Chinese, Japanese and Vietnamese architecture. We drove onward to Hue, where we would have dinner and spend the night.



The following day we visited the DMZ near Quang Tri and the town of Dong Ha. Then we headed to the Vinh Moc Tunnel complex to see the underground village created as a bomb shelter. Hue City was the site of another wheelchair distribution. We provided 160 wheelchairs to individuals and institutions.

We visited the Hue City Children's Shelter. Many of the children here had been abandoned or sold to human trafficking. The 30-50 children located at the children's shelter receive training to enable them to achieve self-sufficiency. The shelter receives no government funding and is supported by the *Friends of Hue Foundation*, based in San Jose, California.

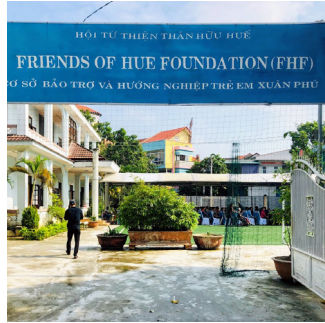
Joseph Callaway entered the army as a private in 1965 and, after being commissioned as an officer through Infantry OCS (Officer Candidate School), served in Vietnam from December 1966 until July 1968 as an infantry platoon leader with the 9th Division, a combat advisor to the first Thai regiment deployed to Vietnam, and as a staff officer with the 5th Special Forces. Joe is also a member of the *Vietnam Veterans of Diablo Valley*, and his peers supported him in his decision to return to Vietnam 54 years later.

Joe recalls his evening in Hue,

"Particular noteworthy was the fabulously memorable dinner we had with about 20 former NVA (North Vietnamese Army) soldiers that started solemn and stiff, but evolved (after voluminous beer consumption) into riotous revelry! Singing, beer can crushing, handshaking and hugging between soldiers who once wanted to kill one another. Most poignant, but memorable, was when one former NVA soldier told one of our group, 'I'm glad I didn't kill you.' Our member responded, 'I'm also glad you didn't kill me.'"



CLOCKWISE FROM FROM LEFT: >>> Cai Rang floating market on the Mekong River provides fresh fruits and vegetables to the surrounding cities and villages. >>> Famous for fresh cut pineapple-on-a-stick, there is even a vessel waiting to fulfill your every drink desire. Weasel-poop coffee, anyone? >>> A chance for opposing sides to sit down years later and share a meal goes a long way toward healing old wounds. Respect is understood, regardless of language barriers. >>> Dennis Giacovelli represents *Vietnam Veterans of Diablo Valley* at our wheelchair distribution in Hue, Vietnam. >>> Antoine Duong with two elderly recipients whose families and caregivers will also benefit from the receipt of a brand new red wheelchair. >>> "Beer can crushing!" and "Yoo!" singing make for a memorable night for all involved as former war fighters reunited and embraced as friends. >>>



We flew from Hue to Hanoi, and took in the nightlife in the Old Quarter, which is where families go for fun in the late evening. Here we worked with the *Hanoi Red Cross* to distribute wheelchairs in Hanoi.

Gary Pforr, another VVDV member traveling with the group observed,

“Participation in the distribution of wheelchairs by the Wheelchair Foundation was the most emotionally moving experience of our journey. Despite Vietnam’s widespread economic development and improved standard of living for most, it’s evident that many physically and mentally disabled persons, along with their parental caregivers, have been left behind and live in poverty. Some middle-aged parents transported their adult children to the distribution events literally on their backs. The appreciation and gratefulness they expressed after receiving their wheelchairs was emotionally heart wrenching.”

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT: >>> New shoes! A welcome gift, among the candy, school supplies, clothing and toys donated during our visit. >>> *Friends of Hue Foundation* is a San Jose, California, based not-for-profit serving the children at *Ha Cau Orphanage*. >>> Josh Routh poses with the kids from *Ha Cau Orphanage*. >>> Dennis Giacovelli, Helen Duong and Joe Callaway with a wheelchair recipient loaded up with dry goods and supplies, follow our wheelchair distribution in Hanoi. >>> Recipients receiving wheelchairs in Hanoi. >>> Joe Callaway standing with a former member of the North Vietnamese Army whose son was born with a disability attributed to Agent Orange. There are very high rates of birth defects and cancer in Vietnam. >>>

We capped our afternoon with a visit to *Ha Cau Orphanage Center* in Ha Dong, outside Hanoi. Approximately 30-40 abandoned children live at the orphanage and attend public school during the day and are nurtured by 74-year-old Mrs. Tran Thuc Ninh, who is assisted by four, dedicated, caregivers. The operation survives on local private donations.





We spent time in the morning at the U.S. Embassy and the very active American Recovery Excavation Operation where 1,271 of our soldiers still remain missing in action (MIA). We saw the infamous POW Hanoi Hilton and visited the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency.

Joe Callaway -

“Despite all of the incredible evidence of Vietnam’s recovery from war rubble, its striking geologic features, the fantastic trip planning and management, the ebullient attitude and kind and engaging behavior of the Vietnamese - one element of this trip superseded all else; the personable, inspirational leadership and bonding friendship provided by Josh Routh. Josh has been a wheelchair user his entire life and was making his 34th worldwide, physically demanding, wheelchair distribution trip.



Josh’s unwavering personal strength, kind gentle spirit, perseverance and positive attitude made us all better, more thoughtful and tolerant travelers. We started looking for the better angels within ourselves, and elevated our trip with a sense of harmony and good will. We were all humbled and proud to be called Josh’s Friend.”

Our final, and northernmost destination was majestic Ha Long Bay, where we spent the night aboard a yacht. The next day we returned to Hanoi and then home to the States. Special thanks to Helen Duong and everyone involved in making this experience possible!



season highlights

CHANGING THE WORLD



COUNTERCLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT: >>> On Saturday, January 25th of this year, in celebration of the Chinese Lunar New Year, Blackhawk Museum opened its doors to the public and welcomed northern California inside for the Grand Opening of our *Into China* gallery. David and May Behring posed in Emperor's attire and greeted more than 4,500 Bay Area guests. >>> Nightlife for families living in Hanoi, Vietnam. The streets surrounding Hoan Kiem Lake in the Old Quarter offer food, fun and beautiful views. >>> Ha Long Bay at sunset is a sight to behold. Our team paused here at the end of their distribution trip. >>> Moses receives a wheelchair in Iringa, Tanzania, as John Banovich of Wildscapes Foundation and Friedkin Conservation Fund continue fulfilling the need for mobility in remote rural Tanzania. >>> Motor Scooter = Minivan. Always a thrilling site to Westerners visiting Asia, Vietnam offers sighting of almost anything being carried on a motorcycle. Families, farm animals, produce, furniture, lumber, are common. Also common are daredevils who deny the laws of physics! >>>





CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: >>> Martin Yan with Charli Butterfield and Steve Nelson, at Pat Behring's fundraiser for disaster relief. >>> Chande Edward Kiyeyeu 21-years-old, receives a wheelchair in Iringa, Tanzania. Chande is excited to now have independent access to water, medical services and his own vegetable garden. Thank you to the Rotary Club of Iringa for delivering mobility to those in need in rural Africa. >>> Bob Herzog with a woman collecting a wheelchair for a family member too ill to travel. Working with a network of organizations in Vietnam allows us to provide mobility to those most in need by making access easier for all. >>> Bill Wheeler, 2020 *Spirit of Mobility* award recipient in Hoi An, Vietnam. Did you know that Snake Wine dates back to the Chinese Zhou dynasty and is said to cure rheumatism and hair loss? Did you know that in 2013, a woman in China's Heilongjiang Province opened a bottle and was bitten by a venomous viper that was improperly pickled and hibernating inside for three months? Google it. >>> The rotunda at the entrance of Blackhawk Museum erupts in color with dancers in costume representing the 56 provinces and ethnic cultures of China at the Grand Opening of *Into China* Lunar New Year celebration! >>>



WHEELCHAIR FOUNDATION 20TH ANNIVERSARY GALA
SATURDAY - OCTOBER 3RD 2020
AT BLACKHAWK MUSEUM

CELEBRATING 2020
SPIRIT OF MOBILITY
HONOREES



Don Routh, Josh Routh, and Bill Wheeler
FROM THE HEART (DEL CORAZON)

Over the last two decades there are three gentlemen who have given so much "from the heart" in order to help and provide mobility to the physically disabled population across the globe. Don Routh, his son Josh and Bill Wheeler have delivered over 15,000 wheelchairs to 20 countries on 34 separate trips. They have worked tirelessly to raise funds and then felt that it was absolutely essential to be present to personally deliver the wheelchairs whether it be in Mexico, Peru or Uganda. Josh has spent his entire life in a wheelchair. His unique experience, friendliness and passion make him an extraordinary ambassador for the Wheelchair Foundation.

In addition they wanted to educate young people about philanthropy, raise their awareness about the need for mobility around the world and sensitize both teachers and students to the challenges those with disabilities (like Josh) face in their daily lives. Their "From the Heart" schools program has now impacted over 100,000 students and 3000 teachers in over 70 schools in northern California. The three of you have been extraordinary volunteers and have used your hearts to change the world in so many different ways.

the spirit of mobility

CONTINUING IN THE SPIRIT OF KEN BEHRING WHEELCHAIRS FOR RURAL AFRICA



Thank you to John Banovich of *Wildscapes Foundation* and *Friedkin Conservation Fund* for fulfilling the request of the Rotary Club of Iringa, Tanzania, for five wheelchairs. Club members delivered a wheelchair to 13-year-old Daniel Kihanza. This is his first wheelchair. Now Daniel will be able to go to school with his friends and get health and social services he is unable to access without a wheelchair.



Greetings from Zimbabwe and hope you are fine. I particularly wanted to send you this little story about a 13-year-old girl and her very poor parents. The girl has just received her Wheelchair Foundation wheelchair and she still has dust on her knuckles and knees, where she dragged herself to her chair! The messages from her family to me (and ultimately to you) were so warm! ~ Patric Mavros

-Thank you Sir! I have handed the wheelchair to the family thus in need. The family is really happy! Sir, the family wish for your picture, just to see you. They are humbled for your assistance. They ask that you stay blessed. With her parents now, they are so dignified but have nothing!



The man, Thomas Oketch, is experiencing paralysis and he has lost his capacity to talk. Prior to becoming sick he was the sole bread winner of the family. He was a taxi driver in Kisumu, Kenya, a port town on Lake Victoria. His wife died in April of 2019, leaving him with two grown children.

Until today, Thomas has been carried around by his daughter, who takes care of him now. Getting a wheelchair will significantly change both their lives, as you can imagine.

The man standing next to Thomas is Peter Agina. Peter runs an agency in Nairobi, looking after street children, and I have worked with Peter since 2007. Thomas is a friend of Peter, Peter made the 225 mile journey from Nairobi to Kisumu to deliver the wheelchair.

All the best, and thank you again for making this possible.

~ Dr. David Kasibante - International Donor

DISTRICT 4130 ROTARIANS TEAM UP WITH ROTARY CLUBS FROM NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

CONTRIBUTED BY DAVID BEHRING



The last week of February this year, we returned to Monterrey, Mexico, for a wheelchair distribution and other “hands-on” community service. On Friday, we painted a Senior Center for Alzheimer’s patients (“celery white” was the color they chose), planted five trees and presented three people with wheelchairs. One of them was a polio survivor, which made the day even more powerful. Because of the efforts of Rotary, and the Gates Foundation, we don’t really see any young people with polio anymore, and most people today don’t realize how devastating a disease this was a half-century ago.

Along with about 20 other Rotarians from Northern California, we interacted with Rotarians from many of the Monterrey area’s 18 Rotary Clubs. Their hospitality is legendary and it was so fun to look at their projects and enjoy Members Out dinners (including a restaurant known for its goat or “Cabrito” dishes) as we continue the “*Amigos Para Siempre*” philosophy we adopted 17-years-ago with the Monterrey Rotarians. It has been so rewarding for us to partner on so many projects.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: >>> Wheelchairs were donated to *University Hospital* in Monterrey >>> A Rotarian volunteer from northern California and a Rotarian Volunteer from Monterrey, work together staging wheelchairs for distribution. >>> Jim Vlantis, Sara Ennor, Kathy Chiverton, David and May Behring and Monterrey Rotarians donate three brand new wheelchairs to seniors. Thank you Rotarians! >>>

REACHING OUT TO HELP CENTRAL CHINA



In the fall of 2019 the Wheelchair Foundation offices in Shanghai, China, set out to distribute wheelchairs to elderly and others in need of mobility in central China. Wheelchair Foundation has enjoyed a long and successful relationship with the Chinese Disabled People's Federation and we continue to work together to provide mobility to those who might not otherwise be able to get around. We have been able to provide mobility to hundreds of thousands of citizens in the past two decades.

Wheelchair distributions were conducted in Hubei and Jiangsu Provinces. Several nursing homes and elder-care facilities received wheelchairs for patients, including Le Kang, HeTong, Machiko and Yichaun nursing homes. Our staff interviews recipients to better understand their situation and needs. Occasionally, they are fortunate enough to encounter someone who has received a wheelchair during a previous wheelchair distribution. These chance meetings can be very uplifting:

"My name is Zhou Xiaomin. I was born in the beautiful town of Taizhou, which is in Jiangsu Province, in central China.

A horrible car accident in 2014 left me a paraplegic, bankrupt and living by borrow money from friends and family. The worse thing is I have to lie in bed. I felt like I was a wild beast in a cage, with the TV the only tool to let me feel the rest of the world.

April of 2018, I received a wheelchair from Wheelchair Foundation. I am so happy! Finally, I am able to go outside, after 4 years. I start to meet new friends and suddenly understand that there are lots of disabled people who never give up living. I joined a local volunteer club to start helping other people. I finally found the purpose of my life! With all the help I received, I opened my own business.

With the wheelchair, I visited our martyr's cemetery. The chance to do this makes me so proud, since I was a soldier. I entered the Taizhou City Disabled People's Half-Marathon, and finished seventh. I joined the Shanghai Barrier Free Facilities trip and I even visited Disneyland, 'The happiest land of the world,' and the happiest time of my life.

With the wheelchair, I received so many opportunities. I also received respect, confidence and an understanding of the beauty of freedom."

WHEELCHAIRS FOR NEVADA

WE ARE BACK TO FINISH THE JOB AND FULFILL OUR PROMISE



LEFT: >>> Don Williams (left) and Ken Behring (right) buying cars at an auto auction in 1984. The two would go on to build the world's greatest collection of classic automobiles, The Blackhawk Collection, and then sell it. >>> The Imperial Palace Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, circa 1980's. Together, owner Ralph Englestad and Don Williams hosted many of the era's most successful classic automobile auctions at this venue. In August of 2005, following Hurricane Katrina, the Englestad's opened their Biloxi, Mississippi, hotel to FEMA workers and served as a staging site for the distribution of thousands of wheelchairs in the aftermath. >>>

Twenty years ago, on June 13, 2000, Kenneth E. Behring announced his intent to deliver a wheelchair to every child, teen and adult in the world who needs one, but cannot afford one. In 20 years we have provided more than 1,115,000 wheelchairs in 150 + countries.

Mr. Behring's enthusiasm for Wheelchair Foundation was infectious, and soon piqued the interest of his closest friends and business associates. It was of particular interest to those who knew Ken Behring best. Ken had a reputation for having a 10-year attention span; 10 years of obsessive interest in a project and then on to something new!

A fellow businessman and longtime friend, Don Williams, knew all-too-well the effects of losing Ken Behring's interest. Don and Ken were partners in the Blackhawk Auto Museum and Don and Ken had worked together to build the premier classic car collection in the world, which resided at Blackhawk Museum. In 1988, Don and his auto collection fell victim to Ken's new obsession, his recently purchased NFL Football Team – The Seattle Seahawks.

"Suddenly, I felt like last year's old toy!" as Don remembers it.

Don Williams is no slouch. He liked that Ken had found such joy in Wheelchair Foundation and helping others, and he too, soon followed suit, helping deliver wheelchairs and fundraising to provide more wheelchairs to meet the growing need. Don started sharing stories of Ken's new found passion with friends, and invited them to get involved and, "Just try it once, you'll be hooked!" This elicits a laugh from Don, "It kind of sells itself."

While Ken Behring focused on Wheelchair Foundation's international work, building an international board of advisors and advocating for awareness of the plight of the disabled to Heads of State, Don chose to focus closer to home. Ken Behring was not Don's only client; he knew nearly every classic car collector in the world, and he was a deal maker.

Don befriended Ralph Englestad in 1986 through car deals. Ralph owned the Imperial Palace Casino and Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada, and he and Don hosted some of the most successful auto auctions of the time there. Ralph and his wife Betty lived in Nevada, but were originally from North Dakota, and somehow Don found himself at the *Ralph Englestad Arena* in Grand Forks -

"Ralph invited me to the arena for a hockey game. I was sitting with Ralph and Betty and Ed Schafer, the Governor, and I suggested that Ralph and Betty donate wheelchairs to anyone in need in the State, and they said, 'okay, let's do it!' The next thing I know, I'm standing at center ice between periods with Governor Schafer, declaring that 'the Englestad's are going to give wheelchairs to anyone who needed one in North Dakota!' We followed that up by immediately sending the State 2,000 wheelchairs."

Don later decided to ask the Englestads to do the same for Nevada.

“Ralph kinda paused, and asked about ‘the impact on the disabled in North Dakota?’ He wasn’t sure it had done any real good? Ralph was a busy man, he had his own charitable foundation, a casino in Mississippi now, and I didn’t bother him often. I did have hundreds of letters, written by recipients and their families, from throughout North Dakota. Each one describing its own harrowing story and some incredible life-change from receiving the gift of mobility.

I showed the letters to Ralph and Betty, and before my eyes, I swear I saw Ralph’s heart turn. He asked how many wheelchairs I thought we would need, and I told him ten thousand to start. Ralph suggested we start with 4,500, and I agreed. Then I picked up the phone and called my brother, John.”



John Williams or “Wheelchair John,” has earned his name by single-handedly coordinating the distribution of more than 10,000 wheelchairs throughout the State of Nevada.

“Don called me, out of the blue one day, and asked me if I could help him with some wheelchairs? And I said ‘sure!’ I lined everything up. I had Channel 13 News there when we unloaded the first container. The reporter asked for a phone number where people could reach me if they need a wheelchair? I didn’t have an office phone yet, so I gave my personal cell phone number. My phone rang for four days straight! I still get calls from people needing wheelchairs, and its 18 years later!”

In mid-April of 2020, John received a container of 280 wheelchairs, specifically for residents of the State of Nevada. There are more on their way, thousands of them, and John is ready, with donated warehouse space in multiple cities, waiting.

Please take a look at our website www.wheelchairfoundation.org and read a few letters from recipients, maybe your State has disabled folks who could benefit from the gift of mobility, too? Are you a Nevada business interested in sponsoring John’s work, or joining his network? Matched-Funding opportunities available! Find us on Facebook - Tune in to John’s POD Cast to learn more!



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: >>> Mid-April 2020, the first container of 280 wheelchairs arrives for Nevada Wheelchair Foundation. Volunteers came out to assist with unloading the tractor trailer and ready wheelchairs for shipment around the State. >>> Many hands make light work and we are thankful to those inspired to help. >>> John Williams with Mr. Ruiz, one of 2020’s first recipients. Eleven years of diabetes, kidney and liver issues and trying to exist on welfare, led him to us on the world wide web. He has a donated motorized scooter, but it is too big for his one room home where he lives with his wife. A wheelchair will give him the freedom to move about with less difficulty and more dignity. >>>

“I’m like a whirlwind! I love to help people and I am a problem solver and I network to get things done. Anybody can buy and pay for stuff, but it takes capital. The job is networking and getting those services for free. That is *the job*.”

John is very good at his job. When the first wave of Engelstad wheelchairs landed in Nevada in 2002, John rented a truck and personally systematically scattered them throughout the State. Service organizations, churches, synagogues, clinics, hospitals, Veteran’s facilities, old-folks homes, John spoke to them all and delivered wheelchairs where needed. There is video of John Williams, hundreds of yards deep into the massive storm-drainage system beneath the city of Las Vegas, carrying a red wheelchair to a homeless man who lives underground, with *Freedom House* and *Shine-a-Light* outreach.

“Whatever it takes!”

Do you live in Nevada and need a wheelchair?
Nevada Wheelchair Foundation

Program Director: John Williams

916 West Owens Avenue

Las Vegas, NV 89106

Phone Number 702-847-6250

E-mail: john@nevadawheelchairfoundation.org

www.wheelchairfoundation.org/program/nevada



Wheelchair FOUNDATION

3820 Blackhawk Road
Danville, CA 94506-4617 USA

A Division of
Behring Global Educational Foundation
Tax ID # 94-3353881

NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 260
DANVILLE, CA



GREAT GIFTS FOR YOU! OUR THANKS FOR YOUR GIFT OF MOBILITY!

With your donation of **\$100 or more** you will receive our incredible candy apple red triple function pen with flashlight and stylus!



Donate **\$150 or more** and you will *also* receive a personalized certificate with a photo of a wheelchair recipient, sent in a beautiful presentation folder!



\$500 or more and you are also going to receive our ultra-brite anodized *Tomahawk™* Safety Flashlight, along with your beautiful personalized presentation folder and your pen!



DONATING IS EASY, SAFE AND SECURE AT WWW.WHEELCHAIRFOUNDATION.ORG
DONATE BY PHONE: 877-378-3839 BY FAX: 925-736-0309

