

Changing

THE WORLD



SPRING 2024

A MESSAGE FROM DAVID BEHRING



Dear Friends,

During a one-month period earlier this year I went through two very different but equally exhilarating and joyful experiences regarding the "Gift of Mobility". On February 17th the Wheelchair Foundation partnered with Viet Dreams at a Gala called Wheel and Grace at the Blackhawk Museum. The event featured the beautiful voice of YLan, one of the most famous Vietnamese singers, along with a lively Lion Dance and stunning fashion show orchestrated by the well-known clothing designer Le Thanh Hoa. The purpose of the evening was not only to enjoy a fun evening of cultural entertainment but also to raise funds to help provide wheelchairs, medical support and clean drinking water to the people of Vietnam. Netting over \$100,000, the evening was a huge success and my event partner, Helen Duong, is now working on our October itinerary in Vietnam to personally witness how our success that evening will transform lives halfway across the globe.

A few weeks later I journeyed down to Puerto Vallarta with 25 friends and family (including my 7-month pregnant daughter and 22-month old grandson) to distribute wheelchairs with the assistance of Luz Maria Ortiz and her terrific members from the Puerto Vallarta Sur Rotary Club. After we assembled and lined up the wheelchairs, our group gazed out at 40 primarily elderly people (with their families, of course) eagerly waiting to finally have a wheelchair. Within that group were 7 amputees (including 4 double amputees). The scourge of diabetes and lack of adequate medical treatment has resulted in frequent amputations throughout Mexico. Our translators also described recipients with birth defects, paralysis from gunshots and accidents and just plain old age. The funds for these wheelchairs had come from an event we held the previous summer. It truly stirs the soul to personally witness the actual benefits from the efforts that go into fund raising.

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.

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Written and edited by:
Joel Hodge,
Program Director

Contributors: David
Behring, Charli Butterfield,
Eva Carleton, Darren Cox,
Don Davis, Jeff Juri, Glenn
Tupper, John Williams



A Division of Behring Global Education Foundation
FEIN 84-4053692

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.....	12,616	Maldives.....	10
Armenia.....	3,244	Mali.....	1,060
Australia.....	292	Malta.....	240
Azerbaijan.....	280	Marshall Islands.....	140
Bahamas.....	4,235	Mauritania.....	100
Bangladesh.....	350	Mexico.....	184,133
Barbados.....	1,990	Micronesia.....	1,265
Belarus.....	990	Moldova.....	1,720
Belgium.....	280	Mongolia.....	1,320
Belize.....	3,855	Montenegro.....	120
Benin.....	280	Morocco.....	5,470
Bolivia.....	6,904	Mozambique.....	1,660
Bosnia-Herzegovina.....	2,040	Myanmar (Burma).....	1,100
Botswana.....	1,958	Namibia.....	466
Brazil.....	2,305	Nepal.....	4,815
Bulgaria.....	530	Nicaragua.....	9,889
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.....	4,005
Chile.....	11,668	Palestinian Territories.....	1,906
China.....	491,786	Panama.....	19,700
Colombia.....	13,852	Papua New Guinea.....	2,680
Congo, The Democratic Republic of the.....	205	Paraguay.....	2,614
Costa Rica.....	10,603	Peru.....	17,037
Croatia.....	1,300	Philippines.....	11,855
Cuba.....	1,800	Poland.....	2,700
Cyprus.....	280	Portugal.....	990
Czech Republic.....	597	Puerto Rico.....	490
Dominica.....	280	Romania.....	4,341
Dominican Republic.....	10,503	Russia.....	2,230
East Timor.....	110	Rwanda.....	2,440
Ecuador.....	11,209	Saint Lucia.....	1,070
Egypt.....	1,168	Saint Petersburg.....	120
El Salvador.....	11,555	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.....	935
Eritrea.....	250	Samoa.....	1,360
Estonia.....	500	Saudi Arabia.....	20
Ethiopia.....	3,738	Senegal.....	630
Fiji.....	2,520	Serbia.....	2,625
France.....	560	Seychelles.....	30
French Polynesia.....	280	Sierra Leone.....	2,610
Georgia.....	1,030	Slovenia.....	110
Ghana.....	2,850	Solomon Islands.....	110
Greece.....	520	Somalia.....	88
Grenada.....	280	South Africa.....	24,550
Guam.....	250	Spain.....	500
Guatemala.....	12,288	Sri Lanka.....	3,170
Guyana.....	250	Sudan.....	280
Haiti.....	5,660	Suriname.....	520
Honduras.....	9,874	Swaziland.....	1,970
Hungary.....	120	Syria.....	641
India.....	2,716	Tajikistan.....	720
Indonesia.....	3,340	Tanzania.....	5,798
Iran.....	3,880	Thailand.....	8,640
Iraq.....	4,300	Tonga.....	500
Israel.....	8,110	Trinidad & Tobago.....	6,735
Italy.....	580	Turkey.....	5,790
Jamaica.....	5,510	Turkmenistan.....	520
Japan.....	1,750	Uganda.....	12,537
Jordan.....	5,022	Ukraine.....	6,871
Kazakhstan.....	1,510	United States.....	43,445
Kenya.....	3,920	Uruguay.....	1,862
Kiribati.....	375	Uzbekistan.....	1,240
Korea, North.....	1,352	Vanuatu.....	250
Korea, South.....	5,700	Venezuela.....	4,720
Kosovo.....	1,300	Vietnam.....	15,216
Kyrgyzstan.....	1,500	Virgin Islands (UK).....	284
Laos.....	1020	Virgin Islands (US).....	280
Latvia.....	740	Western Sahara.....	153
Lebanon.....	2,430	Zambia.....	2,646
Lesotho.....	1,060	Zimbabwe.....	3,600
Liberia.....	780		

TOTAL COUNTRIES AND REGIONS.....150+
 TOTAL WHEELCHAIRS.....1,194,999

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO HELPS US MAKE
 INCREDIBLE THINGS HAPPEN WORLDWIDE
 - A FRIEND OF A FRIEND IN NEED -

One of the greatest pleasures working in a field that allows you to help people in need is when your network comes together and what seems impossible becomes reality. A friend of Wheelchair Foundation asked if we could help a man in Nepal. We just happened to have wheelchairs arriving in Kathmandu, made introductions and were able to provide a KANGA wheelchair with a specialized seating system, all through e-mail.

Mr. Mukhya Gurung says, "Thank you!"



Mukhya gurung.
Thank you so much.

BLACKHAWK MUSEUM - PATRICIA BEHRING 2024
 SPRING SPEAKER SERIES WELCOMES
 SANDRA BUTTON, CHAIRMAN OF
 THE PEBBLE BEACH CONCOURS d'ELEGANCE



Sandra Button, recognized as one of the most important people in the collector car world, opened our 2024 Spring Speaker Series. Seen here with the 1939 Delage D6-3L Grand Prix, Sandra helped facilitate the loan of this 1939 24 Hours of Le Mans competitor to Blackhawk Museum. We applaud Sandra and Martin Button for their years of continued support. Thank you!

VLADIMIR GUERRERO JR. HITS A GRAND SLAM IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Contributed by Steve Beinke



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT: >>> Major League Baseball All-Star player Vladimir Guerrero Jr. gives a thumbs up with a young recipient in the community of Don Gregorio, Nizao, Dominican Republic. >>> 2023 Home Run Derby Champion, just like his father in 2007. >>> VG24 - the logo of Vladimir Guerrero Jr's foundation - with a mission "To provide support to children, youth and families through educational, sports, health and environmental programs and projects to improve their living conditions and be part of a better future." >>> Steve Beinke (President of Behring Global Education Foundation), David Behring (President of Wheelchair Foundation), Vladimir Guerrero Jr., Dr. Celso Marancinni (President of ADR) and Dr. Luis Cruz Jiminian from ADR, at the presentation of Wheelchair Foundation's KANGA seating and positioning systems for use in the ADR system of clinics throughout the Dominican Republic. We wish to thank everyone involved in this effort. The joy in what we can achieve together was felt by all. Thank you. >>>

In addition to giving the gift of mobility to over 1.2 million men, women, and children around the world the Wheelchair Foundation is blessed with great partners that help with their time, talent and resources. Last December these partners, Prime Sports Management and Major League Baseball's All-Star first baseman for the Toronto Blue Jays Vladimir Guerrero Jr. and his Foundation, delivered a container of wheelchairs to the Dominican Republic.

Joining myself was David Behring (President of the Wheelchair Foundation), Matt Beinke (Board Member), Scott Ford (Wheelchair Foundation Florida), Bart Hernandez and Scott Shapiro (Prime Sports Management) who helped organize the distribution with Vladimir Guerrero Jr. along with Marlene Garcia from Vladimir's Foundation.

We appreciate the help of Dr. Celso Marancinni, President of the Association of Dominican for Rehabilitation (ADR), whose mother founded the ADR in 1950, and Dr. Luis Cruz Jiminian, a key member of the ADR. Today they have 37 facilities helping people with disabilities throughout the Dominican Republic.

The Wheelchair Foundation has partnered with Major League Baseball, Oakland Athletics and ADR in the past. Dr. Marancinni estimates that they are in need of another 2,500 wheelchairs just to help with the current need.

Assisting us in the DR was Marcelle Martinez Benetti, President of Milo Mar Group. Marcelle helped us with the distribution and she asked us to visit one of the two orphanages that she helps support in the DR. One is run by Catholic Nuns and the other by a group of Pastors. Each has 20 children of all ages and, as you can imagine, is in need of just about everything. We asked the Nuns what we could do for the children for Christmas as they had no money for Christmas presents and they said a few bikes would help give the children exercise and allow them to get to school easier. With Marcelle's help we purchased 40 bikes (20 for each orphanage-one for each child) as a Christmas gift.

We look forward to working with our Dominican Republic partners in the future and continuing to help those in need of mobility around the world. Watch our website for more upcoming events with professional athletes!

CHANGING LIVES AND MAKING NEW FRIENDS IN PUERTO VALLARTA, MEXICO

Contributed by Charli Butterfield



ABOVE: >>> Our group of travelers, eight-months following the event in which each person decided to take on the challenge of wheelchair distribution. For nearly 25 years, we have chaperoned and guided others into our own neighborhoods and backyards, as well as the barrios, slums, jungles and megacities of the world to assist those without access to mobility and the means to acquire it. Imagine the anticipation, excitement and surprise of their adventure. It is eye-opening to give the gift of mobility, and the opportunity to see the impact of your eight-months of work and waiting. Thank you to all who volunteered and said, "I'm in! Let's go!" >>>

On July 8th, 2023 the Wheelchair Foundation and Wine for Wheels held a Country Hoedown fundraiser at the beautiful Blackhawk Museum. We had super fun bands: Singer/Songwriter Sadie Bass played outside to welcome everyone and The Brodie Stewart Band played while we danced the night away and enjoyed the amazing evening while raising money. During the auction we offered a trip to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, to distribute wheelchairs and that started our amazing adventure.

More than 24 people signed up for the distribution trip, and the wheelchairs were ordered. Fondo Unido and the Rotary Club of Puerto Vallarta Sur were instrumental in clearing our wheelchairs with our own Eva Carleton. David Behring, our President, Jeff Behring, Co-founder of Wine for Wheels and I immediately started working with Luz Maria Ortiz with the Rotary Club of Puerto Vallarta Sur to set up this life-changing mission.

Twenty-three adults and two small children set off on March 13th to Puerto Vallarta for our adventure. We had donors from all over the United States join us. Luz Maria Ortiz, her husband E Russell Smith and the Rotary Club President of Puerto Vallarta Sur, Sharon Delett met us at the airport with a big banner to welcome us!

On Friday March 15th we all crammed into two vans to travel to Bahia de Banderas for our first distribution. We snuggled into our vans, quickly becoming reacquainted with old friends, meeting new friends and together we endured the bumpy ride to our event site. Everyone immediately began to assemble about 40 wheelchairs, with Stephanie Padgett, David Behring's daughter, putting all the wheelchairs in perfect order for each person's needs. Our volunteers began to welcome the recipients upon arrival. So many of them were either unable to bring themselves in, and were quickly given a wheelchair from a volunteer to help them take a seat, while others were assisted by their families, or had borrowed a wheelchair or other device to bring them.

One of our volunteers, Steve Nelson, mentioned he was particularly moved by a mother of no more than 100 pounds helping her son that was almost twice as big as her come to get his new wheelchair. The Rotary Club called out the names and wheelchair sizes and our donors took turns, helping each of the recipients into their new wheelchairs. Many were met with tears of joy, and stories about how the wheelchair was so desperately needed. They wanted to tell their stories of what had caused them to need a wheelchair. Many lost limbs from diabetes and



accidents, others were born with disabilities that caused them to lose their mobility, while others were elderly. Each wheelchair brought hope for the future, along with hugs and tears of joy and gratitude. After everyone received their wheelchair we all gathered around while a few recipients who wanted to tell their stories, through an interpreter, shared their journey through life. Many spoke of their desire to persevere with the help of their new wheelchair, and expressed their sincere thanks to all who helped make this day so special for them.

On Saturday, March 16th we gathered again for our journey to La Lija, Puerto Vallarta to deliver more than 60 wheelchairs to those in need. The trip was much closer, and without all the bumpy roads, but it wouldn't have mattered; we were ready for anything, and were ready to get to work. The venue was larger, indoors and air conditioned, and everyone knew exactly what to do. The donor volunteers jumped into action again, putting together all the wheelchairs, greeting our arrivals, taking photos, putting up banners, getting ready for the exciting day.

The Rotary Club of Puerto Vallarta Sur was once again so organized, and each deserving recipient was met with a smiling, enthusiastic volunteer to place them in their much-needed wheelchair. We enjoyed the stories so much the day before, that once everyone had their wheelchair we gathered again to hear more life-changing stories about how this wheelchair would make such a difference in their lives. We even had a young man sing to us, bringing us once again to tears.

After our hard work we were rewarded with memories to last a lifetime, along with new friends who look forward to another journey to deliver more wheelchairs and keep changing lives.

Please get involved, choose your favorite country in need, we will match your funds raised for a container of wheelchairs, and you too can experience this precious moving experience.

ABOVE LEFT: >>> Our group traveled to the Island of Quimixto, to deliver three wheelchairs to elderly recipients. With only 1,000 inhabitants and only accessible by boat, the effort to provide this aid was appreciated. >>> ABOVE RIGHT >>> Wheelchair Foundation President, David Behring and volunteer, Lisa Phan, carry a brand new wheelchair from the boat dock, upstairs, to a disable man who is visually impaired>>> Lana Fletcher with a young recipient in Puerto Vallarta. >>> Steve Cannatella and Richard Geithman assemble wheelchairs before a distribution event. >>> Bob Maxwell and Joanne Severs unbox new wheelchairs and get them ready for new riders. >>> The gift of music is offered in thanks for the gift of mobility in Mexico. >>>





Contributed by Don Davis

I would like to share a story of two beautiful souls named Maria Guadalupe and Maria Paula and their amazing parents. I was accompanied on this trip by my wife, Whitney, and our 8-month-old son, Luca as well as several other selfless volunteers with the Wheelchair Foundation and the Puerto Vallarta Rotary. Maria Guadalupe and Maria Paula were born triplets with a somewhat rare condition called congenital hydrocephalus where excess fluid accumulates in the brain prior to or at birth. If not caught early and immediately treated it can have devastating effects including paralysis. Maria Guadalupe was born first and was paralyzed from the waist down. Maria Paula was born next and was paralyzed from head to toe with the exception of minor movement of her eyes and a few of her fingers. Their sister was the last to be delivered and did not survive. On the day of our delivery, the two girls were 27 years old.

The first thing I couldn't help but notice was this immense sense of gratitude and unconditional love radiating from their parents. They were so grateful when they spoke, referring to us as angels bringing them gifts from God. "Dios los bendiga por estar aqui", they cried out, immediately bringing tears to our eyes. Maria Guadalupe, the paraplegic sister, was the first to receive her wheelchair, and told her very emotional story. It was difficult for her to finish as she cried tears that seemed to communicate a story of suffering and joy at the same time. Luca, at 8 months of age, seems to only want to be held by his parents these days, but after Maria Guadalupe was done speaking, he reached his arms out towards her as if he knew she needed a hug. I took his cue and walked over and just handed him to her sitting on the wheelchair. They hugged, and she held him on her lap for about 15 minutes while we prepared to meet her sister, Maria Paula.

Maria Paula, a bedridden quadriplegic, was in much worse shape. She could not talk. With very minor exceptions, she really couldn't move. She was paralyzed from head to toe, and required a very specialized wheelchair with a lot more structure, neck and head support, body straps, and gears to tilt the chair

back for additional stability and comfort. It was the first time that I had helped put together and deliver this type of wheelchair. Her father picked her up from her bed and carried her out to place her in the chair. Several adjustments were required to get her to fit comfortably. It wasn't easy. Her head kept falling to one side. We finally got it right, and asked her parents if she was comfortable and happy. They replied when she's not comfortable and happy, she cries, and she wasn't crying so that means she's happy. Then I felt two of Maria Paula's fingers graze back and forth along my hand which shocked me at first as I didn't at that time realize she had any capability to move at all. Her father said that was her way of saying thank you. "Muchas gracias, tambien!", I told her.



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: >>> From the left - Our Rotary Volunteer host with Steve Nelson, Don Davis, Mom, Charli Butterfield, Whitney and Luca Davis, and Dad, with Maria Paula (left) and Maria Guadalupe (right). >>> BELOW: Maria Paula and Luca Davis. Wheelchair Foundation welcomes everyone, young and old alike, to experience the joy of helping others, wherever they may be. Join us! >>>

season highlights

CHANGING THE WORLD



COUNTER-CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: >>> Wheelchair Provision being administered in Dushanbe, Tajikistan with the assistance of Stichting Assistance International. Many observations affirm the benefits of wheelchair mobility and effects upon mood, mental state, physical health and increased social and economic opportunities >>> Volunteer - Joanne Severs in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, with the Wheelchair Foundation assembling wheelchairs before recipients arrive. Thank you for your help! >>> Nevada Chapter of Wheelchair Foundation flexes it's muscle and spreads mobility State wide with a top-notch crew of dedicated volunteers, making sure that everyone who needs access to a wheelchair can have it. >>> Thank you to Adobe Road Winery for pouring at our Wheel & Grace event this Spring. Adobe Road has been a stalwart sponsor of Wheelchair Foundation and our work worldwide. >>> The evening gown look styled by Internationally acclaimed fashion designer Le Tranh Hoa provides another facet of wonder in grand entrance at Blackhawk Museum.





CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: >>> From Ukraine, a gesture of love and appreciation from Klevan War Veterans Hospital. The recipient is the man in charge of the facility, wounded in the ongoing conflict. >>> Las Vegas, Nevada, Punk Rock legends *Wheelchair Mosh Pit* is pledging a portion of proceeds from their performances to Nevada Chapter of Wheelchair Foundation to provide wheelchairs to folks in need. Thank you for your support! >>> Wheelchairs for Ukraine sponsored by Rotary District 5170, Don, Josh and Friends and Wheelchair Foundation arrive at their destinations throughout the country in April 2024. >>> Dragon Dancers at the Wheel & Grace fund raiser for Vietnam, hosted by Viet Dreams and Wheelchair Foundation. >>> Vladimir Guerrero Jr., with a young boy in the Dominican Republic. The big league slugger recently partnered his VG27 foundation with the work of ADR and Wheelchair Foundation in the Dominican Republic to provide aid. Guerrero Jr., is a brilliant and talented young athlete who has discovered purpose in giving back to communities where his contributions create impact. >>> Jade Photography on hand to document our Dragon Dancers as they open the night at the Wheel & Grace fund raising event in support of projects in Vietnam. Together we raised nearly \$100,000 for clean water, education and healthcare. >>>





Contributed by Helen and Antoine Duong

On February 14, 2024, Viet Dreams hosted Wheel & Grace alongside Wheelchair Foundation at the Blackhawk Museum. This is Viet Dreams first joint fund raising event and we are so thrilled to announce that it was also the most successful one yet. With your support, we will be able to provide thousands of people with clean drinking water, medical support and wheelchairs in Vietnam. The proceeds of this fund raising event will be given equally to both Viet Dreams and Wheelchair Foundation for our projects.

Thank you for being a vital part of this meaningful journey. Because of you Viet Dreams has been able to provide clean drinking water and medical support to more than 130,000 children in the remote areas of Vietnam yearly. In the last 13 years, we have kept our promise that 100% of your donation goes to our projects. We couldn't have achieved this goal without our main event supporters.

Our commitment to this cause stems from a profound belief in the transformative power of mobility. Witnessing firsthand the challenges faced by individuals with mobility impairments in Vietnam, we were compelled to take action. The lack of access to wheelchairs not only limits their physical movement but also hinders their ability to participate fully in society, access education, and pursue opportunities for a better future.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: >>> Internationally acclaimed Vietnamese Fashion Designer Le Thanh Hoa provided a runway that dazzled our guests. >>> David and May Behring enjoying the Into China gallery at Blackhawk Museum. >>> Vietnamese Pop Star Y Lan performed two amazing sets for us. >>> Beautiful couture crossing the runway at Blackhawk Museum. >>> Our event's coordinator, Viet Dream's own Helen Doung, longtime partner and supporter of Wheelchair Foundation and our efforts to provide mobility to the disabled and less fortunate of Vietnam. >>>

Every wheelchair distributed represents more than just a mobility aid; it symbolizes freedom, dignity, and hope. It opens doors to independence and empowers individuals to live their lives with greater autonomy and dignity. This belief is what drives us to tirelessly advocate for fund raising efforts and collaborate with organizations like the Wheelchair Foundation and Viet Dreams to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those in need.

We are looking forward to the distribution event in October 2024 with Wheelchair Foundation and the Vietnam Veterans of Diablo Valley, and it fills us with immense anticipation and excitement. It marks the culmination of our collective efforts and represents a tangible step towards positive change. Seeing the smiles on the faces of recipients as they receive their wheelchairs reaffirms the importance of our mission and fuels our determination to continue advocating for the cause.

We are deeply grateful for your ongoing support and generosity, which have been instrumental in making this initiative possible. Together, we are making a lasting impact and transforming lives for the better.

Thank you for believing in our mission and standing with us in our commitment to create a world where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.



ABOVE: >>> Our celebration of the Year of the Dragon and a wonderful opportunity to get dressed up for a good cause. >>> Our incredible and generous crowd for the night. Thank you for attending! >>> Dragon Dancer started our night and thrilled all with their acrobatic feats. >>> The Don Williams Automobile Gallery provides a one-of-a-kind backdrop for our fashion show. >>> LEFT - CLOCKWISE: >>> Army Veteran - Dennis Giacovelli of Vietnam Veterans of Diablo Valley, shares his gratitude for the opportunity to help those he once stood opposite on the battlefield, and his joy to return to Vietnam this Fall. >>> Yet another stunning look from the runway! >>> Guests gave generously at our auction and made our fund raiser a huge success. Thank you everyone for your support! >>> Fashion Designer Le Thanh Hoa addresses the crowd before generously offering up one of his gowns for sale to benefit the evening's event. >>> Thank you to HMM Model Management, Ngoc Jade Photography, Dong Le, Kelly Nguyen, Jet Duong and Helen Duong for our participation and efforts! >>>





NINE DAYS AND 3,200 MILES TO DELIVER 260 WHEELCHAIRS TO THE PEOPLE OF UKRAINE

Photos and Story Contributed by Glenn Tupper

Here's a snapshot of what was a very fluid situation, due to many of the moving, dangerous conditions in the eastern portion of Ukraine. Overall, the memorable part of this mission, that I think you may try to weave into the story, is the distance and how widespread the drop points were for one single load of 260 wheelchairs. I was driving an ambulance in a war zone for a total of 3,200 miles and was pretty worn out by the end.

I must also tell you that, unlike other countries and circumstances, the Ukrainian people are very private and secretive about the number of casualties and loss of life totals. They pride themselves on hiding the real numbers so as not to broadcast their vulnerabilities. So, for that reason alone, it was nearly impossible to get that many recipients to come out of the wards to be photographed and give their names. This group was on a hellfire schedule and we never paused for long, and you can see how many miles we covered in a short period of time; that was more the objective, I believe, with this foundation.

First off, the trip with ambulances from the Slovakia border to Kyiv takes 3 days as we stop at some predetermined locations to attend meetings and continue some of the projects started on previous missions. Many focused on increasing funding for mental health efforts in the years to come, as so much of Ukraine's population is directly affected by the length and breadth of this terrible war. Basically, our wheelchairs landed at a warehouse in Kyiv prior to our arrival, and we went over to meet up with the crew headed by Oleksandr Reshetkov. He is a young man who works for Ukraine Focus but single-handedly coordinated all of the major logistics for our distribution in Ukraine. Anyway, he organized a large truck and two drivers, who, with a crew of six, loaded the truck and two ambulances with wheelchairs and supplies.

Saturday, March 2nd - We took off as a team on a 197 km journey to Slavutych Social and Psychological Rehabilitation Center and Slavutych Rehabilitation Center, to drop 35 wheelchairs. These were some of the only pictures I was able to take of a recipient. The gentleman in the red coat with a flag and soldiers helping.

ABOVE: >>> Delivering wheelchairs to Slavutych Rehabilitation Center and providing a new wheelchair for the leader of the facility. >>> BELOW - CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: >>> Our author, Glenn Tupper and the Ambulance crew from *Ukraine Focus*, along their 3,200 mile journey. >>> Unloading pediatric much needed pediatric wheelchairs. >>> A too common site in every small town, tributes to those lost to war continue to grow. >>> Wheelchairs delivered to Vinnytsia City Clinical Hospital of Emergency Medicine are immediately transferred to an underground for storage with other supplies. >>>





He was the leader of the rehab center, and a Military General, I believe, who was wounded. He literally cried and hugged us repeatedly, thanking us for our efforts to reach himself and others in need.

March 3rd and 4th - We had some more medical facility meetings in the morning at another town then headed to the next location where we dropped off 20 chairs and toured the Klevan War Veteran's Hospital. Again, the reception and appreciation were immense, and I think each place was amazed at the amount of effort made by our team and the Wheelchair Foundation to deliver this aid.

March 5th - Off we went to a town that was a regular for us, having previously received donated ambulances, The Chernivtsi Region Rehabilitation Institutions, where the Governor greeted us and we were able to drop off 60 wheelchairs.

March 6th and 7th - Next, we delivered 40 chairs to Vinnytsia City Clinical Hospital of Emergency Medicine. This was a cool place because they were a very high-end facility with a



FROM TOP LEFT : >>> When you ask, "Is there anything else we can bring you?" And they respond, "Yes! Flack Jackets and bullet-proof vests." >>> ABOVE: >>> The value of mobility in a time of uncertainty can be immeasurable. Often seniors are among the most vulnerable and providing them with wheelchairs can equate to a better quality of life as well as independence. >>> A happy, seasoned wheelchair rider is able to acquire a new wheelchair thanks to our Ambulance of mobility! >>>

renowned doctor who is considered one of the best for dealing with immediate injuries coming in from the front. The day we delivered 31 wheelchairs the facility was receiving a train with multiple patients and we were told the doctor had to deal with a few extreme immediate severe cases. He apologized for not being able to attend dinner but said he was so grateful for the effort and the gift of wheelchairs.

We delivered 56 wheelchairs to the Department of Social Protection of the Population of the Mykolaiv Regional Military Administration in Mykolaiv before we headed back to Slovakia. We had a total of 48 chairs back at Kyiv which were put together by the crew and delivered personally a week later, on March 28th, to Dnipropetrovsk Regional Physiotherapy Hospital Solonyi Liman.



WITH A MISSION TO PROVIDE MOBILITY TO THE WHOLE STATE OF NEVADA

Photos and Story Contributed by John & Ivy Williams



Our Golf tournament for the Nevada Chapter of Wheelchair Foundation is May 13th. A concert for mobility awareness is in the making. Northern Nevada Lions clubs have distributed close to 75 wheelchairs in their area helping us achieve a broader reach and to become a true state-wide foundation.

Special Thanks to Richard Harris Law Office, G Dallas Horton Law, Las Vegas Rotary, Lions District 46 in Nevada, Kiwanis clubs and many volunteers making the Nevada Chapter of Wheelchair Foundation number one on Google for wheelchairs in Nevada!

ABOVE LEFT: >>> Celebrating Silver State Pediatric rehabilitation, our community came together and provided families with young children, much needed wheelchairs to make their lives easier. >>> BELOW LEFT: >>> The Drive KANGA seating and positioning system for individuals with neuromuscular challenges who need more support and a higher degree of customizing to gain functionality. A true life-changer if you need gravity on your side, with seat belts, bracing and tilt functions. >>>

The Nevada Chapter of Wheelchair Foundation continues circling the state with friendship, hope and mobility. These past months been busy! We received our shipment of KANGA children's specialized wheelchairs which were sponsored by an Engelstad Foundation grant.

Over 50 specialty wheelchairs were distributed during the Silver State Pediatric rehabilitation event, with the Las Vegas Fire Department and Police Departments on hand to greet the kids that were there. So many parents were grateful that their children were finally receiving mobility, a gift that would grant the family the ability to get to the doctors, or something as simple as a family day at the mall.



Do you live in Nevada and need a wheelchair?
Nevada Wheelchair Foundation
 Program Director: John Williams
 4955 North Durango, Ste 123
 Las Vegas, NV 89113
 Phone Number 702-900-3362
 E-mail: john@nevadawheelchairfoundation.org
www.wheelchairfoundation.org/program/nevada

TAJIKISTAN WHEELCHAIR SERVICE PROVISION PROJECT



Photos and Story Contributed Sooncheul Kweon

Stichting Assistance International (SAI) has prepared this report to document the provision of wheelchairs in Tajikistan in 2023. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to David Hwang and Hee Dahl Park of Tiny Share of Field Activity that raised the funds and Wheelchair Foundation handled the logistics of manufacture and delivery. We are grateful to the Ministry of Health (MOH) and National Union of People with Disabilities (NuPD) in Tajikistan that collaborated to ensure the success of this initiative.

We are indebted to all our distribution partners, especially the MOH and the main NuPD in Dushanbe, and the branches of NuPD in Bobojon Gafurov district and Tursunzoda that worked together in creating the recipients lists, providing the one-week wheelchair provision service training course for local staff, and distributing the wheelchairs. We would have achieved little without the guidance, support, participation, and unique contributions of these partners.

The Wheelchair Service Provision Project in Tajikistan was initiated with the aim of providing essential mobility solutions to individuals with mobility impairments. The project's primary focus was to identify those in need of wheelchairs, assess their requirements, and distribute suitable wheelchairs to enable them to regain their mobility, improve their quality of life, and promote inclusivity. SAI, as implementing organization, participated in creating the list of recipients, took the lead in receiving the container of wheelchairs, and distributed the wheelchairs in 3 different cities in Tajikistan.



The Project successfully provided mobility solutions to individuals with mobility impairments. Through collaboration, assessment, and distribution, the project enhanced the lives of individuals and provided wheelchairs to needy places. We believe the lessons learned from the process of distribution and evaluation this year will guide our future endeavors, leading to a more effective way of meeting the individual needs of wheelchair users and ensuring even greater success of wheelchair service provision projects in the future.

ABOVE: >>> Stichting Assistance International held wheelchair distributions throughout Tajikistan and studied the impact of the receipt of a wheelchair. Their findings were revealing, with feedback about the positive mental, physical and social aspects of mobility being highlighted by recipient testimony. >>> BELOW: Although it is possible to get around with a prosthesis, or crutches, there are limitations. A wheelchair provides relief when getting around isn't that easy. These gifts of mobility are greatly appreciated. >>> Efforts are put forth to assure the maximum comfort and utility is achieved with each wheelchair presented to a recipient in Tajikistan. >>>



www.assistance-international.org



Wheelchair FOUNDATION

3820 Blackhawk Road
Danville, CA 94506-4617 USA

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