

# Changing THE WORLD



WINTER 2024

# A MESSAGE FROM DAVID BEHRING



Dear Friends,

As we prepare to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Wheelchair Foundation in a few months at Galas in Florida and California, I would like to take this opportunity to reflect back on some of our key accomplishments. First and foremost we have successfully delivered over 1,200,000 wheelchairs to 156 countries. When we started the foundation, there were very few organizations delivering wheelchairs and most of them were doing less than 500 each year. By collaborating with governments and thousands of organizations across the world to properly ensure the manufacturing, importation, delivery and distribution of these wheelchairs, we greatly increased the awareness of disability and the importance of these mobility devices. In 2000 when we began our humanitarian work you rarely saw wheelchairs in many of these countries and their governments really had no idea how many of their citizens lacked the mobility to attend school, visit the local market or go to work. As our longtime supporter Don Routh often says, "Mobility is a human right." We couldn't agree more and pride ourselves on helping others receive that right.

Wars and natural disasters are unlikely to abate in the future; in fact, I suspect the opposite will happen. Populations across the world are getting older and we are living longer. That demographic will undoubtedly require more mobility devices. While certain diseases like polio (thanks to all of our Rotarians) have been basically eradicated, many other diseases will still make it extremely difficult for part of our population to move on their own. We now offer specialized wheelchairs to help those individuals.

Young people will play a critical role in the future of our world and we need to be role models to them by demonstrating the importance of community service. We have always encouraged students to go on wheelchair distributions through our "From the Heart" program so they can develop empathy and understanding for people less fortunate than ourselves.

The smiles, handshakes and hugs we receive from the recipients, their family members and friends are concurrently impossible to measure and forget. We eagerly look forward to them on every wheelchair trip.

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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## 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.....          | 2,181   |
| 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.....                                  | 1,020   | 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

## DRIVE FORE MOBILITY- 21st ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT A HUGE SUCCESS!



This year we had a sold-out golf tournament and raised more than \$130,000.00 for Wheelchair Foundation. Proceeds from this year's tournament will go to support the Vietnam Veterans of Diablo Valley on their sixth return trip to Vietnam to distribute wheelchairs. Congratulations to our winning foursome – Sam Shaikh, Nate Cook, Blake Ollar and Jeff Ahart – who shot a combined 52 for the win! Thank you to all of our sponsors and guests for making this, our 21st, another successful outing.

## OJ DISABILITY CARE FOUNDATION PROVIDING HELP TO A SINGLE MOTHER OF THREE DISABLED CHILDREN IN THE CAMCAM VILLAGE, KITGUM DISTRICT, NORTHERN UGANDA



Our team in Kitgum had only registered one person to benefit from our wheelchairs but the mother, Sarah, came to us crying telling us that she had more two children who needed mobility. We had to tell her to go and bring the other remaining children so that they could receive their wheelchairs too. You can imagine what the single mother has been going through. You can imagine the economic burden these children pose to this family. To those who have supported us in one way or the other, please, this is how your generosity is changing lives. We have all relieved the mother from the pain of carrying these boys from one point to another.

# ROTARY CLUB OF MARION, NORTH CAROLINA ON A MISSION TO PROVIDE HOPE, FREEDOM AND MOBILITY IN UKRAINE

Contributed by Frank Dean / Photos by Glenn Tupper

**"IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO UNDERSTAND THE REASONING BEHIND THE BRUTALITY TO WHICH UKRAINE HAS BEEN SUBJECTED"**



ABOVE LEFT: >>> Sergii and his wife Tetiana live in Moshchun, Ukraine outside of Kyiv. He has his own bus and it was his sole source of income. When the Russians came into his village he went out to check on his wife, who was coming back from the local village market, and he was shot in the hand, the shoulder and the lower leg - which was amputated due to the extent of the wound. He has no insurance and no way to resume his work. He is bed bound until he gets a prosthesis. Our wheelchair is getting him up and out a bit, and he was very, very grateful. His wife was also in need of a wheelchair. >>> ABOVE RIGHT CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: >>> Sergii's Bus. >>> The wall next to his home where he was shot. >>> Rotarians delivering wheelchairs door-to-door to accommodate the wounded. >>> Unboxing and assembling wheelchairs for Sergii and Tetiana, both in need of mobility and without the means or ability to acquire it in war-torn Ukraine. >>>

**A**s a retired 29-year Army officer and a veteran of Desert Storm, I have closely followed the war in Ukraine. Over the last 20 years I have been involved in a dozen wheelchair distributions with the Wheelchair Foundation into third world countries, but never one in an active war zone. Our team of six delivered 240 wheelchairs and 321 combat tourniquets to Kyiv, Ukraine, August 13 – 26.

First, I would like to give you some background on how this distribution came about. It began on April 3, 2022. I had not watched the CBS television show 60-Minutes in over five years. They were filming in Ukraine, and I wanted to see what was taking place. It showed Charles Pelly filming in a city hospital that Russia had attacked.

A young couple had brought their four-year-old daughter wrapped in a blood-soaked light blue blanket. She dies! The mother was kissing the child and placing the blanket over her head. The event did two things: it brought me to tears, and it made me determined to do something to help the people of Ukraine.

The next day the incoming president of our Rotary club called and asked if I would support packing 100,000 meals for Ukraine. Our club had packaged 100,000 for Ukraine about six months earlier. I said "No, but I would support 1,000,000 meals." We selected a retired Army colonel to head up the project. He put together a multi-district grant with three other districts to accomplish the \$170,000 project. Mission accomplished!



I have had the honor of being affiliated with the Wheelchair Foundation for over 20 years. I cannot say enough good and positive things about this incredible organization! Originally, the plan was to take these wheelchairs to El Salvador. One morning a little over a year ago I told my wife that I am not supposed to go to Central America. She asked, "where are you going?" I said, "Ukraine." We have been married for 56 years, and she knows I have always viewed life as an adventure. She always tells me as I walk out the door, "Frank be safe, and come back home."

To begin with you need money and the right kind of people to do a mission like this. I contacted a friend who had been a part of our 2019 distribution in Peru. When I told him the plan, he said he was in, and sent a substantial check that started the money-raising aspect. The second member of the team was one of my tentmates during Desert Storm. This was his seventh distribution with me. Rounding out the team was a doctor, a linguist that spoke five Slovak languages, and two gentlemen that had made multiple trips to Ukraine on humanitarian operations.



ABOVE: >>> This is Olax and his wife, Natalia. This couple lost their son and grandson three weeks before we arrived to give Olax his wheelchair. The father, son and grandson were out in the courtyard of their low-income state housing apartment when a cruise missile was intercepted by the Ukrainian air defense system. The wings of the incoming missile fell and killed their son and four-year-old grandson, and took Olax's leg. They were devastated and extremely depressed, as you can see above. He has no chance of receiving a prosthesis either, so he was very grateful to receive a wheelchair. Poverty and the effects of war equal suffering. >>> RIGHT: >>> Team Ukraine (with Rotarian Frank Dean on the far right) helping a woman who is using a four-wheeled cart for mobility - hopefully restoring some dignity with a brand new wheelchair. >>>

After it became apparent the mission was a go, the first team member flew to Ukraine with his wife and daughter to lay the groundwork. Another member of our team, who had made multiple trips to Ukraine, provided him with a Rotary contact in Lviv with a warehouse. The problem was it was not large enough to accommodate 240 wheelchairs. Our goal was to push the wheelchairs as far forward to the east, toward the Russian border, as possible. That gentleman referred him to another Rotarian in Kyiv who was a Past District Governor with a much larger warehouse. Sergi was a Godsend to the mission with his warehouse, getting our schedule together, and providing qualified recipients.

We did experience some obstacles along the way, but an obstacle is nothing more than an opportunity to excel. The Rotary Club of Marion, North Carolina raised \$28,000, which was matched by the Wheelchair Foundation. The order was placed, and it took about six months to manufacture and transport the wheelchairs to the warehouse in Kyiv. Our team began arriving on August 13th and our last members were out by August 26th. Even though there were several daily air raid sirens, we did not catch a single round. However, on the 27th Putin sent in over 100 missiles and drones. One missile hit a military cadet barracks killing 48.



We distributed wheelchairs in homes and hospitals to civilians and soldiers. I can say this without a shadow of doubt; I love the Ukrainian people. Their will to fight is second to none!

Before I became involved in this distribution, Ukraine was a country at war halfway around the world. Once you can wrap your five senses around the situation it becomes personal. You learn their pain and what it is like to be vulnerable to daily attacks. You experience their pain. Now, these are my friends we are talking about.

We cannot allow Ukraine to fall! I will go back for additional distributions. If anyone in an organization, a Rotary club or district wants more information, you can get my contact information through the Wheelchair Foundation.

# FROM THE HEART TO HONDURAS

Contributed by Heather Schomaker



ABOVE: >>> Our group From the Heart with recipients in Honduras July of this year. >>> BELOW CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: >>> Meet Maria. She has MS which has left her unable to walk. MS is a progressive disease, but she was hopeful and joyful! Seen here with two stuffed animals for her two boys and a brand new red wheelchair for herself. >>> This husband and wife were able to borrow a wheelchair to make it to our distribution to receive a wheelchair for her. She was injured in a horrific automobile accident, resulting in the loss of both of her legs. They have five children she cares for. >>> BOTTOM: >>> These two men are friends and were both paralyzed by gunshot wounds. It was unclear if they had sustained their injuries as a result of gang violence. Both received new wheelchairs, loaded themselves up and wheeled away. >>>

New and seasoned Wheelchair Foundation volunteers traveled with us to Honduras July 13-20, 2024. Among our dedicated travelers were: San Francisco International School student Tallulah McKennon-Peterson and her mother Wendy, San Ramon Valley High School student Abby Roden and her mother Angie, Dougherty Valley High School student Amber Kaplenko and her mother Diana, who is a teacher at Windemere Middle School, Dougherty Valley High School student Max Duan and his father Shane, who is also a member of Dougherty Valley Rotary Club, student alum Abby Fried, and of course our school program founders Don and Josh Routh and our coordinator, Heather Schomaker.

We are so grateful to our longtime partners in Tegucigalpa, Honduras: Club Rotario de Tegucigalpa. A special thank you to Ramon Sarmiento, Edgardo Yescas, Francisco Manuel Samayoa, and Jose Euceda for their hours of planning to make our week in Honduras so successful!







Our group personally delivered over 180 wheelchairs at larger distribution events, individual homes, and care facilities. One particularly impactful experience was a visit to an orphanage for young children and the disabled. This orphanage is run by nuns who devote their lives to the loving care of those who do not have a family or their families are unable to care for them. Having to care for a disabled child for many in developing countries is a financial burden that is impossible for them to support. Some have no choice but to leave their loved one in the care of someone else.

We were also struck by the number of recipients who were in need of a wheelchair because they were victims of gun violence. We counted 8 individuals who requested a wheelchair due to a debilitating injury caused by a gunshot.



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT: >>> These two women live in a home for the disabled run by Nuns. The home is in a known gang area, however the gangs leave the Nuns alone out of respect. The woman in red is mentally and physically disabled. The woman in blue was the victim of gang rape at the age of 14, then again at 15, when she was beaten so badly she suffered brain damage and permanent disability. Both were abandoned at the home by their families because they could not care for them. Their stories moved many to tears, but when the woman in blue noticed their distress she told our group, "Don't cry for me. I am okay, and I am happy here." >>> Two weeks prior to our distribution this woman delivered a full-term stillborn child. She was already having trouble walking and her labor and delivery pushed her to full paralysis. She arrived with her husband and son, in need a wheelchair. >>> BELOW: >>> This young man was working at his family's dairy shop when a gang robbery took the lives of his father, brother, uncle and cousin. He suffered a gunshot wound which left him paralyzed from the waist down. He was so appreciative of his new wheelchair that he returned the following day with cheese for our group as a "thank you." >>> 53-year-old Ray was injured on a fishing trip when a friend's young son fell overboard. Ray jumped into the ocean to save the boy and his leg got caught in their fishing net resulting in an injury requiring the amputation of his leg. >>>



Visit [www.wheelchairfoundation.org/ftth](http://www.wheelchairfoundation.org/ftth) to get your school involved and come with us!

# season highlights

CHANGING THE WORLD



COUNTER-CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: >>> From rural Tanzania our partner Chem Chem Association sends news of Mariam and Lai, two disabled ladies forced to beg on the dirt streets of Babati, to sustain their families in Karatu Village. Two new wheelchairs instantly gave dignity and mobility to these proud women. >>> District 7670 Rotarian Frank Dean delivers wheelchairs to a clinic in Ukraine. Frank and others have been compelled to help the people of Ukraine, risking life and limb traveling into an active war zone to provide relief. (photo by Glenn Tupper) >>> The good folks at Life Form Taxidermy and Wheelchair Foundation's Charli Butterfield give a brand new wheelchair to Nomtandazo Sibanyoni, a 74-year-old who lost her leg to infection and negligence at a government hospital. She was overjoyed, and told us that she had a doctor's appointment the following day and could now wheel in, rather than crawl. >>> The crew from the 16th hole - Vietnam Veterans of Diablo Valley - who will be traveling to Vietnam this October to deliver more wheelchairs. >>> Our network helped Wayne Mazhonga in Zimbabwe receive a wheelchair so he can go to school. >>>







CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: >>> From Cancun, Mexico, Elvia Alvarado Garcia shares a photo of a nearly 20-year-old wheelchair which has served three family members for nearly two decades of use. "It has been extremely helpful to our family." >>> From the Heart Schools Programs' Heather Schomaker at the Drive Fore Mobility Golf Tournament. Heather is already planning her 2025 trip to the Dominican Republic. If your student would like to be involved, please let us know! [www.wheelchairfoundation.org/fth/](http://www.wheelchairfoundation.org/fth/) >>> Josh and Don Routh, two of the founders of the From the Heart Schools Program and advocates for the worldwide work of Wheelchair Foundation, in Nepal with a new wheelchair recipient. >>> This year's Drive for Mobility Golf Tournament honored all branches of the U.S. Military and those who served. Thank you to all of the volunteers and donors who helped sponsor nearly 100 wheelchairs on the day of the tournament! >>> Our partners in Vietnam successfully unload and transport 560 wheelchairs to seven provinces across Vietnam in preparation for the arrival of our group of Veterans and Wheelchair Foundation President, David Behring, this October. This trip has been years in the planning and marks the sixth return of the Vietnam Veterans of Diablo Valley to Vietnam to distribute wheelchairs to those in need of mobility, but without the means of ability to access a wheelchair on their own. Thank you to everyone involved! >>>





# DELIVERING MOBILITY TO THE PEOPLE OF NEPAL

Contributed by Bill Farrell



ABOVE: >>> Princeton University Class of 1977 - High on a mountain top in Nepal - From left: Dan and Cynthia Jao, Roger Ruckert, Bill Farrell, Judy Wong, Martin Sankey, Marleny Farrell, David Behring and Fred Doar. >>> BELOW - CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: >>> Wheelchairs being unloaded from their ocean freight container upon arrival. >>> Brand new wheelchairs arriving at the Center for Disabled Children Assistance in Kathmandu, Nepal. >>> Martin Sankey and Dan Joa use their engineering and architectural education to assemble and intricate Kanga wheelchair. Demand for seating and positioning wheelchairs is at a premium in Nepal. >>> Wheelchair assembled and ready for new recipients at a distribution site in Pokhara, Nepal. >>>

In April 2024, nine members of the Princeton Class of 1977 traveled from their homes in eastern, western, and central US to Nepal for their 7th wheelchair distribution trip. Working with Dendi Sherpa and his team from the Center for Disabled Children Assistance and the Routh and Haines families, distributions were made in Kathmandu and Pokhara.

Like on the other trips we made, we helped young and old, girls, women, boys and men. Our experienced team was able to efficiently and quickly assemble the specialized Kanga wheelchairs desperately needed by those suffering from cerebral palsy. Unique for our team was helping children whose limbs were burned off when they crawled into open cooking fires as babies. You have not seen a smile until you have seen their smiles as they waited to be lifted from their skateboard, on which they traveled, into their wheelchairs. There was no greater excitement when they were finally sitting in them.







For a greater appreciation of the issues faced by children in Nepal, our classmate Fred Doar arranged a visit to Amar Ghar orphanage in the outskirts of Kathmandu. We were inspired by the progress of these children.

During this trip, David Behring, Fred Doar, Bill and Marleny Farrell, Dan and Cynthia Joa, Roger Ruckert, Martin Sankey and Judy Wong were reminded of our common humanity as we changed the recipients' lives and our own.

Thank you to our author, Bill Farrell. Bill has been the leader of the Princeton Class of 1977's wheelchair distribution trips to Peru and Guatemala. We began doing these wheelchair trips for our 25th reunion and have continued every five years. During that period we have delivered wheelchairs to Guatemala, Peru, Vietnam and Nepal.



LEFT TO RIGHT ABOVE: >>> The transition from a life on the ground, with wooden blocks and strong arms, to the dignity of mobility with a new wheelchair >>> Another before-and-after, from skateboard dependent to the freedom of a brand new wheelchair and the joy that brings to a young child. >>> A few of our travelers at the Pumdikot Shiva Statue near Pokhara, the second tallest statue of Shiva in Nepal, at a height of 108 feet. >>> LEFT - CLOCKWISE: >>> Fred Doar, benefactor of the Ama Ghar orphanage with a Kanga recipient. >>> Judy Wong and Roger Ruckert share a joyful moment with the gift of a new wheelchair. >>> Dan and Cynthia Jao with a young recipient and his mother. >>> Marleny and Bill Farrell in Pokhara with a new wheelchair recipient and his mom. This gift of mobility relieves this mother from having to carry her child everywhere they go. >>>



Special thanks to our distribution partner, The Center for Disabled Children Assistance in Kathmandu, with a mission to provide access to services, resources and opportunities that help to improve the quality of life for children with disabilities and their families. Serving those in the most remote part of the Himalayan region of Nepal.

[www.cdckapan.org](http://www.cdckapan.org)

# WHEELCHAIRS FOR RURAL AFRICA

CONTINUING IN THE SPIRIT OF KENNETH E. BEHRING

Contributed by Steve Nelson



In early May, Charli Butterfield and I traveled to South Africa to help distribute wheelchairs to those in need who couldn't possibly afford one. Each distribution is unique, and each one leaves you with memories to last a lifetime.

One distribution was organized by the local Rotarians at a school for children with various challenges. Bus load after bus load of recipients arrived, and one by one, deserving individuals were seated in shiny red wheelchairs. A young man who had just received his wheelchair pulled me aside and told me of his plans to start a support group for others in his situation. Already he was giving back to his community!

Three days were spent doing home deliveries for 23 people who were unable to travel to a distribution site. Through the generosity of HEDCO, and with the incredible assistance of Life Form Taxidermy and Warriors on Wheelchairs, we bumped along dirt roads in 4WD vehicles, at times physically carrying a wheelchair down narrow trails.

We met a young girl who, immediately upon receiving her wheelchair, wanted to explore her newfound mobility. With fierce determination, she adamantly refused any assistance as she rolled herself around her yard.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: >>> A home delivery to a woman who had spent her life caring for the disabled in her community. Her kindness comes full circle with the gift of a new red wheelchair. >>> HEDCO and RC White River help us get a wheelchair to a young man wishing to start a support group for other disabled in his area. >>> The girl with new found freedom who immediately went to explore her world. >>> Bonthle Lukhele reunited with his friends and neighbors. One wheelchair changes many things. >>>



A young boy named Bonthle Lukhele received his new wheelchair and was soon joined by the neighborhood children who delighted in taking turns pushing him around his spacious backyard. He was now a part of their little community!

And my personal favorite memory from this trip: an elderly woman who, while expressing her joy and gratitude for this amazing gift, suddenly choked up and was unable to continue. Her grandson later explained to us how his grandmother had spent her life visiting disabled members of her community, helping them in any way she could. Now her life had come full circle, and it was she who was receiving the kindness of others.

Each wheelchair distribution is unique, and yet there is one constant: the smiles! The smiles of the recipients, their friends, their family. A smile. The only payment Ken Behring ever asked for!



Contributed by Chante' de Lange

**W**hat a life-changing year 2024 has been, partnering with the Wheelchair Foundation and embarking on an unforgettable journey. A special dedication to Derek Jernstedt, Executive Director of the HEDCO Foundation along with the Board of Directors of the Wheelchair Foundation.

It all started when we, Life-Form Taxidermy, received news that we would be importing another batch of wheelchairs via the Wheelchair Foundation. We at Life-Form Taxidermy were geared to make 2024 the year of making a difference. Our director Cecil Corringham reached out to a local non-profit organization, *Warriors on Wheels*, established and managed by, Ms. Kyla Beukes. She has dedicated her life to finding wheelchairs for rural communities in the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa. Her dedication is fueled by her personal experience with her son who was born with Spina Bifida. Kyla's firsthand experience with the challenges of caring for a person with disabilities was and still is the fire to her passion, to helping those facing similar challenges.

We have changed hundreds of lives this year in a province the Zulu named "The place where the sun rises." That is not even to mention the lives that were impacted across South Africa and Mozambique through numerous other organizations, such as, Sabie Sands Nature Reserve, Graham Sales Safaris, Rotary White River, Mashambanzou Safaris, Sabie Game Park Safaris, Zambeze Delta Safaris, but to name a few. A heartfelt thank you to all the sponsors, organizations, volunteers that offered their time and resources to make this year one for the records.

BELOW LEFT TO RIGHT : >>> Mnenhle Mhlongo, a feisty and talkative eight-year-old, loved her wheelchair and immediately got moving. Due to lack of a mobility device, she had crawled six of her toes off. >>> Mr. Solomon Sandleni left us with a song in our hearts, with his deep voice and big smile. He messaged us later the same evening, "I am still in shock about my wheelchair! I thank you and your whole team. God bless you all!"



The month of May was destined to be blessed beyond measure, as we welcomed Ms. Charli Butterfield, Mr. Steven Nelson and their film crew, for a three-day home visit project in our local town's surrounding rural communities where 21 lives were touched and changed forever along with a main donation day of about 40 wheelchairs given, coordinated with the Rotary White River team.



Contributed by Kyla Beukes

**W**arrior Bailey (pictured above) truly embodies the saying 'dynamite comes in small packages.' We have had the privilege of being part of Bailey's journey, witnessing the miracles unfold in her life. We are immensely proud of this little warrior and the remarkable strides she has taken.

Bailey, a Spina Bifida walker, is starting to feel discomfort during longer distances due to her hip dysplasia. But true to her resilient spirit, she immediately embraced her new wheelchair and off she went, smiling all the while

A heartfelt thank you to Life-Form Taxidermy and Wheelchair Foundation for providing support to Bailey and her loving family. Your assistance means the world as Bailey continues her courageous journey.

Changing lives, one wheelchair at a time.





Wheelchair FOUNDATION 25 Years

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**25TH** January 25th **ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**

**FONTAINEBLEAU MIAMI BEACH**  
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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT  
SCOTT FORD 309-319-8650 OR [SFORD@WHEELCHAIRFOUNDATION.ORG](mailto:SFORD@WHEELCHAIRFOUNDATION.ORG)

Vladimir Guerrero Jr.  
Delivering Wheelchairs in Dominican Republic

SCAN ME

Similar to the ever dynamic and unpredictable hurricane season, the Florida team has been very active this summer. As we enter the fall "season" in South Florida, we look to build upon several promising new partnerships which have been formed over the previous months

**NEW PARTNER: Dominican American National Foundation:** On August 10th WCF was a sponsor of this special event at Loan Depot Park (home of the Miami Marlins) and hosted by the Dominican American National Heritage Foundation (DANF). DANF leadership has offered to assist WCF in identifying and soliciting Dominican Republic connected businesses and individuals here in South Florida.

**NEW PARTNER: Dominican American Chamber of Commerce:** Johnny Matthews - President of the Dominican American Chamber of Commerce (DACC) said he would be happy to partner with us. We hope to have many DACC member organizations provide sponsorships and attendance to the January 25th Anniversary event in January.

**NEW PARTNER: Goodride Foundation:** Wheelchair Foundation friend Marcelle Martinez Bonetti and her charitable organization – GOODRIDE FOUNDATION – is being formally recognized as a supporting partner for the upcoming 25th anniversary celebration

**NEW PARTNER: Rotary Club of Weston, Florida and Rotary Club of Mombasa, Kenya:** Rotary Clubs of Weston, Florida and Mombasa Kenya - this month, Rotarians in both clubs partnered and committed \$32,000 for the purchase of 246 specialty wheelchairs for Kenya.

**NEW PARTNERS: 25th Anniversary Event Beneficiaries:** Marcelle Martinez Bonetti is working with us to extend an invitation to the First Lady of the Dominican Republic – Raquel Arbaje – to our anniversary celebration in January. We are hopeful to have many local political leaders attend also. On January 25th we will come together to celebrate and support the great work of these two beneficiaries:

- **ADR (Mr. Celso Marranzini):** Association Dominicana de Rehabilitacion (ADR) has agreed to identify and bring a child wheelchair recipient and caregiver to Miami to make a presentation at the event. Wheelchair foundation supplied ADR with 280 wheelchairs in 2023.
- **Dr. Louis A. Cruz & Dr. Felix Cruz Jiminian:** Dr. Louis Cruz is the son and heir apparent to the Cruz-Jiminian clinic in Santo Domingo specializing in providing care to underserved communities. Dr Felix Cruz also has his own Foundation in Miami and is widely respected for his philanthropy and love of community.



# NEVADA WHEELCHAIR FOUNDATION



**B**reaking news, John Williams Nevada Wheelchair Foundation Director announced that the Nevada chapter will discontinue operations in the spring of 2025 after many years in the beautiful state of Nevada. Special thanks to Ken Behring and Don Williams for setting up the Nevada Chapter. The Nevada Chapter is under the umbrella of the Behring Global Educational Foundation which includes the Wheelchair Foundation worldwide distributing millions of bright red wheelchairs for those in need of one.

John Williams said it was like family from day one working with David Behring and staff making sure the Nevada Chapter's high quality of communication throughout the state continued at the highest level.

Whoever thought two employees and many volunteers would be able to distribute close to 11,500 new wheelchairs statewide since 2002. The wheelchairs are given personally on a one-on-one basis getting many hugs and tears throughout the years.

Special thanks to Richard Harris Law office for buying containers of wheelchairs over the past few years. RHLF

was very active in the Nevada media with TV and radio spots. Dallas Horton and Associates Law contributed money and personal time at events, public relations spreading the word of the Nevada Chapter. The Engelstad Foundation donated money for the Nevada Chapter getting specialized wheelchairs for our youth with disabilities.

The Las Vegas Rotary Club was aboard from day one contributing time and money but known for having the A-Team doing special personal deliveries for the ones with no way to pick up their new wheelchair. We are indebted to all of the Lions Clubs in Nevada for storing and distributing wheelchairs during the last 20 years.

We greatly appreciate the many volunteers, friends and family members who donated hundreds of hours to the Nevada Chapter. We couldn't have done it without you. We still have hundreds of new wheelchairs ready for the residents of Nevada. David Behring and a few Rotary clubs in Mexico asked if the Nevada Chapter could donate a few wheelchairs and we plan to make this happen. The city of North Las Vegas gave the Nevada Chapter a beautiful certificate of excellence for working with the Fire Department and Police Department for the past ten years. I want to thank Ivy Williams for her support and help for 17 years. She is the backbone who communicates with the recipients with scheduling their new wheelchair deliveries and keeping the office up and going while everyone else is out promoting the Foundation.



***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](mailto:john@nevadawheelchairfoundation.org)**

**[www.wheelchairfoundation.org/program/nevada](http://www.wheelchairfoundation.org/program/nevada)**



# Wheelchair

## FOUNDATION

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For more information  
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Saturday, March 25, 2025  
Blackhawk Museum, Danville, CA

