

wheelchairfoundation.org | FALL 2025



MISSION & GOALS

OUR MISSION

Wheelchair Foundation is a nonprofit organization leading an international effort to raise awareness of the need and challenges of people living with physical disabilities, to promote the joy of giving, foster global friendship, and deliver a wheelchair to every child, teen, and adult who needs one but cannot afford one or does not have access to a wheelchair. For these individuals, Wheelchair Foundation brings 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

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FALL 2025 Issue

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A Message from DAVID BEHRING



Dear Friends.

A few weeks ago, my brother Jeff and I were honored as Pledge to Humanity's 2025 Change Makers of the Year. Gaby Ghorbani founded this foundation ten years ago to inspire young people to become involved with philanthropy locally and internationally. With her smile, compassion for others and infectious energy, she has motivated thousands of students to participate in a multitude of projects by raising funds and contributing their time.

wheelchairfoundation.org

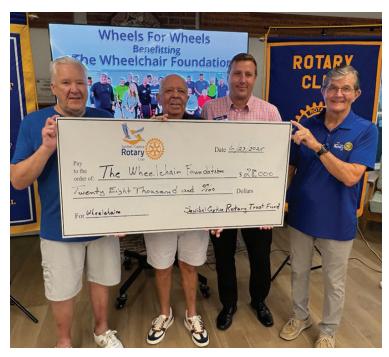
The Wheelchair Foundation and Pledge to Humanity share the common goals of teaching today's youth about philanthropy and helping those less fortunate. Over the years, we have had elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, and college students take active roles in raising funds to provide mobility. Hundreds have gone on trips to foreign countries to physically distribute those wheelchairs.

Don Routh, one of our major donors, initiated a program in our local schools called "From the Heart." His concept featured three major goals: raise awareness about the need for mobility around the world, sensitize students and teachers to the hardships and challenges faced by people with intellectual, developmental and physical disabilities, and finally, to raise funds to help provide wheelchairs to people. Don's program, like Gaby's foundation, has been a spectacular success with the students sponsoring over six thousand wheelchairs to eight different countries.

Community service is not a "one and done." It enriches our heart and soul and can become addictive as we move through life. It is paramount that we do all that we can to instill this spirit in our youth and help transform them into change makers to improve the world around us.

David E. Behring President

ROTARY CLUB OF SANIBEL - CAPTIVA RECOGNIZED FOR TRANSFORMATIVE SUPPORT



Wheelchair Foundation is proud to recognize the incredible fundraising efforts of the Rotary Club of Sanibel-Captiva, whose commitment to mobility and dignity continues to make a life-changing difference around the world.

At their 6th annual "Wheels for Wheels" fundraiser held on April 5th on Sanibel Island, the Rotary Club raised an impressive \$28,000—enough to send another container of wheelchairs to those in need, likely destined for communities in Ecuador or Belize. To mark this milestone, a special recognition plaque was presented by District 6960 Wheelchair Foundation Co-Chairs, Gary Dworkin and Jim Fabry, to the Club President and the dedicated "Wheels for Wheels" committee.

This event is part of an ongoing partnership between Wheelchair Foundation and the Sanibel-Captiva Rotary Club. Over the past five years, their "Wheels for Wheels" initiative has raised over \$140,000, resulting in the delivery of more than 1,400 wheelchairs to individuals across the Caribbean, Central, and South America.

Their generosity is more than a number—it's a testament to the power of community action, and a shining example of what can be accomplished when people come together for a cause greater than themselves.

We're incredibly grateful for the continued support of the Rotary Club of Sanibel-Captiva and look forward to the lives they'll help transform next.

WHEELCHAIRS COMMITTED OR DELIVERED

Afghanistan	7,150
Albania	550
Algeria	1,480
Angola	5,790
Argentina	12 076
Armenia	2 2/1/
Australia	202
Azerbaijan	280
Bahamas	
Bangladesh	350
Barbados	2 270
Belarus	990
Belaium	280
Belize	4,115
Benin	280
Bolivia	6.904
Bosnia-Herzegovina	2,040
BotswanaBrazil	1,958
Brazil	2,305
Bulgaria	530
Burundi	520
Cambodia	3,840
Canada	700
Control African Dopublic	240
Cape Verde	11 028
China	502 636
Colombia	14 372
China	e 205
Costa Rica	10.603
Croatia	1.300
Cuba	1,800
Cyprus	280
Czech Republic	597
Dominica Dominican Republic	280
Dominican Republic	14,189
East Timor	110
Ecuador	11,969
EL Calandar	1,168
EgyptEl Salvador	1,168
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Madagascar	1.270
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Malaysia	4 040
Maldives	10
Mali	1060
Malta Marshall Islands	240
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Mauritania	100
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Micronesia	1.265
Moldova	1720
Mongolia Montenegro	1.320
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Morocco	5 730
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Palestinian Territories	2,181
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Papua New Guinea	2,940
Paraanay	7 614
PeruPhilippines	17,557
Philippines	12,605
Poland	2,700
Portugal	990
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Rwanda	2 4 4 0
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Samoa	1360
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TOTAL COUNTRIES AND REGIONS 150+ **TOTAL WHEELCHAIRS 1,228,837**

DELIVERING MOBILITY TO REMOTE CORNERS OF MEXICO



LEFT TO RIGHT: Recipient Maria Dolores Lopez with Luis Zuniga from the Rotary Club Puerto Vallarta Sur.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Monica Bolasco, Richard Geitman with recipient, Estrada Ruiz Bacilia.



LEFT TO RIGHT BACK ROW: Silva Mirzonian, Michael Marchi, Jeff Behring. IN FRONT: Gaby Ghorbani with recipient.

The group, led by Lorena Jimenez from the Rotary Club of Puerto Vallarta Sur, began their journey to a small mountain town called Mascota, about a two-hour drive from Puerto Vallarta. In Mascota, they delivered 20 wheelchairs to people whose lives would soon be a little easier.

A few recipients were unable to travel, so Lorena and fellow Rotarian Luis carefully loaded the remaining chairs into her pickup truck and set out again—another two hours up winding mountain roads—to a tiny community called El Cabrito.

One of the recipients was María Dolores López, who lives with her husband and two adult sons. Her husband has dementia, and both sons were born with visual impairments.

Caring for her family with very limited resources has taken a toll on María Dolores' own health. After five years of struggling with various ailments, her mobility has diminished so much that she now moves around her home using an old office chair, kindly given by a neighbor.

Because she must care for three family members and has no way to travel, Lorena and Luis brought the wheelchair directly to her home.

When they arrived, the family greeted them with warmth and guiet gratitude. It was clear that this simple delivery meant more than mobility —it meant dignity and relief for a woman who has given so much of herself to others. Thanks to the Wheelchair Foundation, María Dolores can now move more comfortably and care for her loved ones with renewed hope.



Jeff Behring and Michael Marchi. In front recipient, Jose Luis.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Monica Bolasco, Gaby Ghorbani and a happy wheelchair recipient.

ROSA'S JOURNEY



Rosa asked for a wheelchair from us back in April of this year. Sadly, on that occasion, we were unable to provide the wheelchair she needed. Her family members were disheartened we didn't have a wheelchair for her, but we assured them we would be back in July with another container of wheelchairs, and she would be on the top of our wait list.

When July came, Rosa's health had deteriorated, and it was not possible for her to reach Mascota for the July distribution.

Determined to reach her, our team drove to El Cabrito, a mountain community two hours from Mascota and four hours from Puerto Vallarta where Rosa lived, located in the highest section of the Sierra. Asking around, we went up to la Sierra, driving through rough dirt and narrow roads surrounded by ravines. When we arrived at the home, we learned that Rosa had been moved to another community so other family members could take care of her due to her health.

Asking around again, we continued our search climbing stairs and going through a narrow road to reach another home even higher in the Sierra. But Rosa was not there either! She had been moved again, this time to a lower town called Navidad, where her daughter lives. We decided to try again and head for the home, this time lower in the mountain community. Finally, we found Rosa sitting on the porch. She is 100 years old and has suffered a thrombosis, but her eyes lit up as we brought her the wheelchair she had been waiting for. Her daughter, moved to tears, thanked us and asked that we share her gratitude with the generous donors who make moments like this possible.

Through every mile and every obstacle, we fulfilled the mission of the Wheelchair Foundation – delivering mobility, dignity, and hope to those who need it most.



SPECIAL WHEELCHAIR DISTRIBUTION IN ECUADOR



Dr. Mari Jo Cochran



Steve Stewart - Rotary

It was a foggy morning when sixteen Rotarians from four U.S. districts arrived in Guayaguil, Ecuador, to deliver 200 adaptive wheelchairs to people living with severe neurological conditions. The project was led by Past District Governor Woody Sadler, a passionate advocate for mobility. On a prior visit, Woody saw that standard wheelchairs did not meet the needs of many Ecuadorians, especially children. Determined to help, he secured a Rotary Foundation Global Grant for 100 adaptive wheelchairs, which the Wheelchair Foundation matched, doubling the total to 200. His leadership ensured that these specialized chairs — designed for conditions such as multiple sclerosis, Alzheimer's, and birth defects — became a reality.

On the ground, the work was orchestrated by Octavio Jarrín of the Rotary Club of La Puntilla. For over twenty years, Octavio has been the cornerstone of wheelchair projects in Ecuador. His club partnered with local health organizations to identify recipients, assemble the more complex adaptive chairs, and ensure each person was properly fitted with medical oversight. His dedication and experience made a challenging process seamless.

The impact was profound. Families traveled hours to receive a chair. One mother shared the story of her son, one of twins, who lost oxygen at birth and suffered permanent brain damage. Another woman, abandoned as an infant with hydrocephalus, has lived in a group home for 42 years, where she is lovingly called the "Queen." Each story reminded all present that mobility means more than movement — it brings dignity, hope, and relief for entire families.



Joyful moment with a young recipient.

For the American Rotarians, the week was transformative. They adjusted straps, tightened bolts, entertained children with balloons, and witnessed firsthand the gratitude their efforts inspired. For Octavio and his Rotary Team, this was another chapter in decades of service, marked by months of planning and countless details.

Together, Woody's vision and Octavio's partnership show what Rotary and the Wheelchair Foundation can achieve: when hands and hearts unite across borders, hope rolls forward on four wheels.



Woody, Octavio with a recipient and their family.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Lori Sadler, Woody Sadler, Steve Stewart, Michael Dineen, Luis Aldere Vinces Mera, wheelchair recipient. Steve Stewart is from the Rotary Club of Lenore N.C. Dist 7670. All others pictured are from District 7570.



Dr. Mari Jo Cochran







SEASON HIGHLIGHTS





CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT: In Mexico a recipient is all smiles with the help of a volunteer. >>> NEXT TWO PHOTOS: Our emcee Mark Ibanez welcomes our golfers, and Josh Routh, volunteer and co-founder of "From the Heart" program, shows support at the Drive Fore Mobility Golf Tournament >>> Michael Marchi delivers a wheelchair to a recipient in Puerto Vallarta. >>> Charli Butterfield delivers a new, first set of "wheels" to a little boy in Mozambique.











MERCIA'S SMILE: A NEW CHAPTER OF HOPE IN MOZAMBIQUE

Contributed by Deno Cele

In the Hulene neighborhood of Mozambique lives a brave 12-year-old girl named Mercia. She is the second child in her family and has faced challenges since birth. Mercia cannot walk; she is nonverbal and sometimes requires extra care such as wearing diapers. Despite her disabilities, her gentle spirit shines through.

Life has not been easy for Mercia's family. Her father never took responsibility for her, and after his passing, Mercia was left in the care of her devoted mother and younger brother. Her mother works tirelessly, carrying not only the weight of providing for the family but also the daily physical and emotional demands of caring for Mercia without the help of proper equipment.

That all changed the day a wheelchair arrived.



For the first time, Mercia could sit comfortably, safely, and with dignity. No longer confined to being carried or left sitting on the ground, she gained the freedom to move, explore her surroundings, and be included in daily life with her family.

Her mother's eyes filled with tears as she watched her daughter settle into the wheelchair. For her, it was more than a piece of equipment—it was hope, relief, and the gift of possibility. With mobility, Mercia can now attend community activities, interact more with others, and simply enjoy being outside.

Mercia's story is a reminder that every wheelchair delivered is more than just a chair—it is a lifeline, restoring dignity, independence, and joy to families who have carried unimaginable burdens.

HOME DELIVERIES

Contributed by Randy Trost



For years now, I have been delivering wheelchairs to schools in the Bay Area for the From The Heart program, bringing awareness to school children about people with mobility needs.

I finally got to see firsthand how impactful those wheelchairs are. I went to South Africa in August with Charli Butterfield and Dave Trost and personally delivered wheelchairs to homes of those who were desperately in need of a wheelchair. The women sang praises of celebration, and the faces were beaming with smiles. I am forever changed by this experience. I cannot wait to deliver more wheelchairs in the future.

THE GIRL WHO **ROLLED INTO CLASS**

Contributed by Eva Carleton

In the remote village of Kaibaalya, young Ruth used to sit quietly at home while her siblings left for school. Born with spina bifida, she had never set foot in a classroom—her family simply couldn't carry her over the long, hilly paths.

All of that changed when she received a wheelchair through our outreach. Your donation didn't just give Ruth mobility—it gave her a future. Her parents shared their deep gratitude: "We thank you, Mr. Don, for the support that has brought joy and happiness to our family."



Ainebyona Ruth, Age 8

A WHEELCHAIR UNLOCKS **NEILA'S FUTURE**

Contributed by Charli Butterfield



In the Bagamoyo neighborhood in Maputo, Mozambique, lives a determined 14-year-old girl named Neila. She is in the 8th grade, full of curiosity, and dreams of one day becoming a doctor. Neila is very intelligent and loves going to school. But every day, getting there is a challenge. Because of her disability, she cannot move independently. Instead, her mother or grandmother, and sometimes even her classmates and friends, help carry her to school so she can keep pursuing her education.

Life has not been simple. When Neila's father learned she had special needs, he chose to walk away, leaving her mother, grandmother, and uncle to raise her along with her two younger brothers. Yet Neila never let this hardship dim her spirit. She continues to study hard, showing everyone around her that her potential is limitless.

The day Neila received her wheelchair was life-changing. No longer dependent on being carried, she gained freedom and independence. The wheelchair became more than just a seat—it became a vehicle for her dreams. Now, with dignity and mobility, Neila can get to school with greater ease and focus on the bright future ahead of her.

Her dream of becoming a doctor feels closer than ever, and her determination shines as an inspiration to all. With a simple gift of mobility, Neila's path forward has opened wide, reminding us that every wheelchair is a step toward possibility, independence, and hope.

HOPE DELIVERED IN ETHIOPIA

Lead sponsor Halima Lolo, representing Kenna for Kids with Disabilities (Ethiopia-based NGO), helped deliver life-changing mobility to Ethiopia in 2025 through a sponsored container of wheelchairs.

Co-sponsored by Chair the Hope and matched by the Wheelchair Foundation, this was a true team effort. Chair the Hope also traveled to Ethiopia to help distribute the wheelchairs in person.

The photo says it all: mobility, dignity, and opportunity restored.





ACROSS OCEANS, TOGETHER IN SERVICE

Contributed by: Mindy Luong



Vivian's opening photo (symbolic start of the mission).

From the last week of July through the first week of August, VNARP members, friends, and family partnered with the Wheelchair Foundation to bring love and compassion across Vietnam.

In just a few days, we traveled to five destinations—Gò Vấp, Mỹ Tho, Cần Thơ, Đồng Nai, and Phan Thiết—delivering hundreds of wheelchairs to elders, families, and children in need. What we shared was more than mobility; it was dignity, hope, and a powerful reminder that they are not forgotten.

"TOGETHER, ACROSS OCEANS AND BORDERS, WE JOINED HANDS TO TURN COMPASSION INTO ACTION IN VIETNAM"

This mission was also deeply personal. Kim and I were blessed to be joined by my daughter, Vivian, and her five friends from New York and California, along with my dear friend Angie from Ohio, and Kim's daughter, Grace, from Florida. Their youthful energy and compassion proved that service knows no boundaries of age or geography.

Each smile, tear, and embrace will remain with us. We return home changed, grateful, and inspired—already preparing for our 2026 Vietnam Mission.





Warm scenes at Can Tho senior center.



A touching photo of elderly in Phan Thiết.



Final group photo at Phan Thiết, Lâm Đồng Red Cross.



A joyous photo of an elderly in Mỹ Tho, who was on the waiting list for two years.



Parish gathering in Xuân Lộc, Đồng Nai.





BREAKING BARRIERS

Contributed by the Rotary Club of St. Andrew & Rotary Club of Naples in partnership with Wheelchair Foundation



TOP LEFT (FROM LEFT) - Scott Ford, Sonia Nicholson, President, Rotary Club of St Andrew, wheelchair recipient. >>> TOP RIGHT -Rotarian Khadine Carty, PP Jemelia Davis, Chief Justice Hon. Bryan Sykes. >>> MID PAGE - PAG Webster Edwards, PAG Marie Powell, Sonia Nicholson, PP Jemelia Davis, Chief Justice Hon. Bryan Sykes, Scott Ford, Karla Granados, Mrs. Tricia Cameron Anglin, Court Administration Manager, Rotarian Khadine Carty. >>> Bottom - PP Jemelia Davis, Sonia Nicholson, Karla Granados, PAG Judy Hylton, Scott Ford.



United in service, our Florida team joined hands with Rotary members to bring the gift of mobility to those who need it most. One of the most meaningful moments of this mission was meeting with the Hon. Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes, OJ, CD, Chief Justice of Jamaica, to discuss how we can work together to advance accessibility across the nation's courts.

As part of this initiative, we proudly presented the Supreme Court with wheelchairs—ensuring that visitors in need of mobility assistance will never be denied access to justice. This simple yet powerful act represents more than equipment; it symbolizes inclusion, dignity, and the promise that no one should be left behind.

For families across Jamaica, and for those who enter the halls of the Supreme Court, these wheelchairs open doors—literally and figuratively. They ensure that justice and opportunity remain within reach for all, regardless of physical limitations.

With every wheelchair placed, we are not just delivering mobility—we are reshaping communities, empowering individuals, and building a future rooted in compassion and equality.





A DAY OF SWINGS, SMILES, AND SUPPORT FOR MOBILITY









TOP LEFT: Our 22nd Golf Tournament winners Nick Peregrino, Mike Zolnier, Ben Lazzareschi, and Lewie Roche. >>> MID PAGE: Mike and MJ McColgan, longtime supporters of the Wheelchair Foundation, at the dinner auction. >>> BOTTOM LEFT: Amanda Michel, Tiffany Camacho, and Brooklyn Pontious at the registration table helping our golfers at check-in. >>> BOTTOM RIGHT: John Reese, Jim Murphy, Teresa Dias, Denise Cornejo, Tom Amato, and Renee Morgan at our Vietnam Veterans Table.

The Wheelchair Foundation proudly celebrated its 22nd Annual Drive Fore Mobility Golf Tournament at Blackhawk Country Club in Danville, CA, a day filled with camaraderie, competition, and community spirit—all in support of our Mobility for America program. This year's proceeds will provide new, red wheelchairs to Americans of all ages, continuing our mission to deliver hope, mobility, and freedom. Congratulations to our winning foursome — Nick Peregrino, Mike Zolnier, Ben Lazzareschi, and Lewie Roche — who took home the victory with an impressive score of 53!

We also extend our sincere gratitude to our title sponsors UA Local 342 and Herzog Insurance Agency, our tournament chairs Bob Herzog and Vladimer "Val" Nunes, and all the volunteers and committee members who helped make the day possible. A heartfelt thankyou to our event coordinators Kris Nunn, Debby Bruno, and Cassandra Coray from Beyond Golf, Inc., as well as our in-house event administrators Tiffany Camacho and Amanda Michel, for their hard work and dedication in making this year's tournament such a success.

With perfect weather, friendly competition, and the shared joy of giving back, this year's tournament was truly one to remember.





Wheelchair

FOUNDATION

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With your donation of \$100 or more you will receive our silver, triple-function pen with flashlight and stylus.



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\$500 or more and you are also going to receive a 3-in-1 charger along with your presentation folder and pen.





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