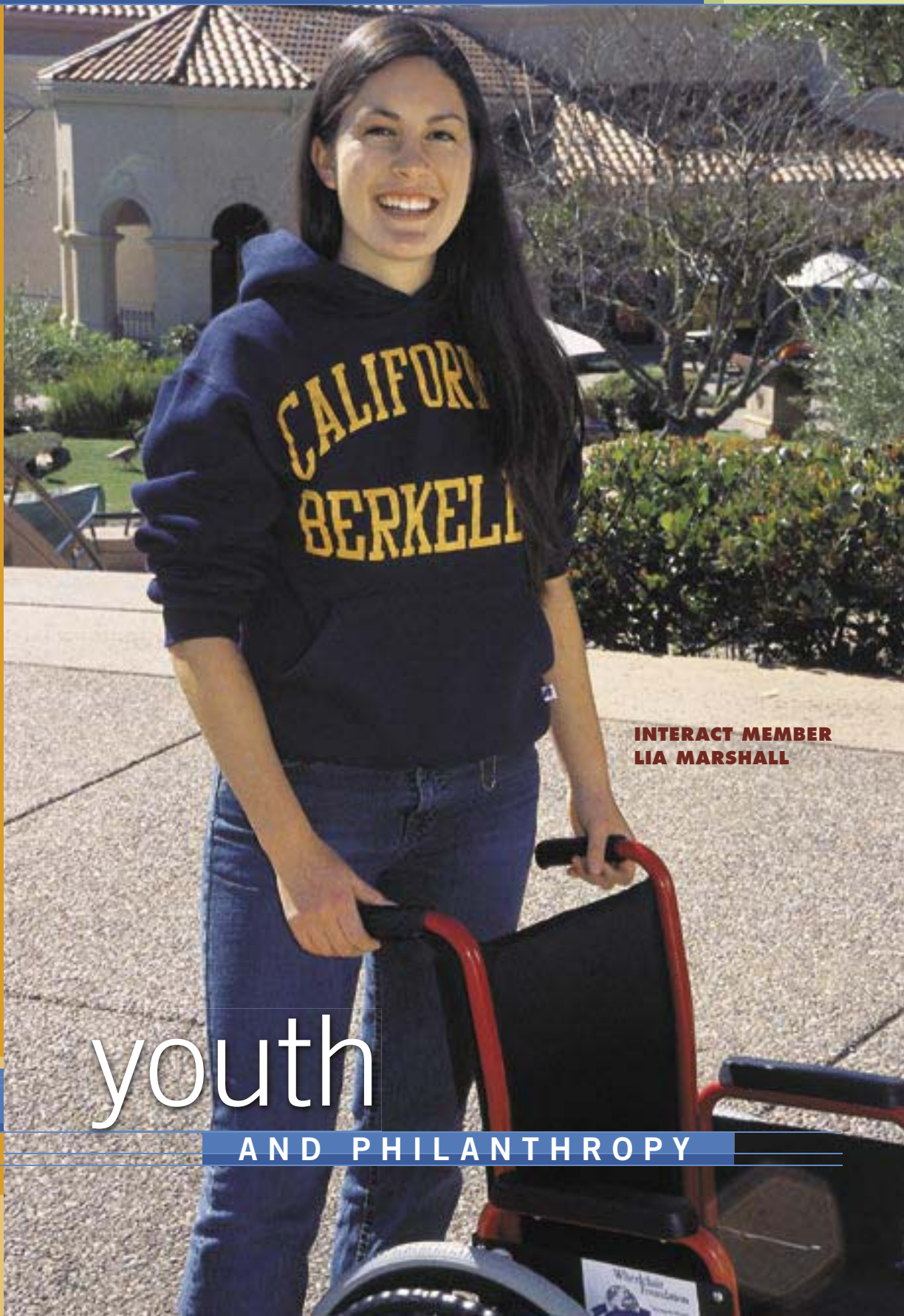


# Changing THE WORLD

■ SPRING 2005



**INTERACT MEMBER  
LIA MARSHALL**

# youth

AND PHILANTHROPY



## A MESSAGE FROM KEN BEHRING



It is a wonderful thing to find purpose in one's life, as I have with the mission of the Wheelchair Foundation. Every time I meet a person that has just received a brand new wheelchair and they thank me for changing their life, I know that our work is valuable and very important. But it is important to me that people know I have not done all of this by myself. If it were not for the loving support of my wife Patricia, and her 54 years of putting up with my dreams and ambi-

tions, I could never have accomplished even a portion of what I have. My son David is the president of the Wheelchair Foundation and has to put up with more than my patience would ever allow, if my father were the chairman of the board. My sons Tom and Jeff are also very involved with our work. Tom handles the human-relationships side of shipping containers of wheelchairs into far-off countries, to people who serve or will serve as our representatives in the distribution of our wheelchairs. Jeff and his family tell our stories and spread the word of what we do at fundraising events he coordinates throughout the year. I guess I never knew that my purpose would also spread to be that for my family, too. But what a nice thing it is to have that as a part of my life and legacy.

What strikes a chord with me is the intentions of another human being. My son David's intentions are to always do the best possible job he can, to further our mission, honor his family and live a life of integrity. What an honor and privilege that is for me to witness on a daily basis. My other sons, their children, wives and friends that have given of themselves beyond the call of duty to help other human beings warms my heart. I am a lucky man. Actually, I am blessed. And I hope to be able to remind myself more often to pay attention to where my greatest assets really are: In the intentions of those who come together for the right reasons and help improve the lives of people with physical disabilities throughout the world.

Thank you for your good intentions and joining us in our mission of changing lives around the world.

Sincerely,

Kenneth E. Behring  
Founder & Chairman of the Board

*For Mr. Behring's biography or information about his book, "Road to Purpose," please visit [www.wheelchairfoundation.org](http://www.wheelchairfoundation.org).*

# mission and goals

### Our Mission

The Wheelchair Foundation is a nonprofit organization leading an international effort to create awareness of the needs and abilities of people with physical disabilities, to promote the joy of giving, create global friendship, and to deliver a wheelchair to every child, teen and adult in the world who needs one, but cannot afford one. For these people, the Wheelchair Foundation delivers Hope, Mobility and Freedom.

### Our Goal

Over the next five years, the Wheelchair Foundation aims to deliver 1 million wheelchairs to people who cannot afford to buy one, and to further the awareness that a wheelchair is no longer an unaffordable relief option for delivery to developing countries around the world.

### Mobility

Since its establishment on June 13, 2000, the Wheelchair Foundation has witnessed tens of thousands of examples of how mobility creates independence and new possibilities for recipients and their families. A mobile child is able to attend school. A mobile adult is able to get a job and provide for their family, or care for the children at home so their spouse can work. An elderly person can rejoin society or family activities after years of staying in a bed. The joy and hope that a simple mobility device can deliver, is what gives people a new outlook on life and hope for the future.



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# international board of advisors

MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL BOARD OF ADVISORS OF THE WHEELCHAIR FOUNDATION ARE INDIVIDUALS COMMITTED TO PROVIDING WHEELCHAIRS TO CHILDREN, TEENS AND ADULTS AROUND THE WORLD WHO CANNOT AFFORD ONE FOR THEMSELVES. THE ADVISORS BRING THEIR EXPERTISE AND EXPERIENCE TO BEAR IN PROVIDING VALUABLE COUNSEL ON THE DIRECTION OF THE FOUNDATION AND SUPPORT IN ACCOMPLISHING ITS GOALS AND FULFILLING ITS MISSION.

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## THE OVERWHELMING NEED FOR WHEELCHAIRS

- People require the use of a wheelchair for many reasons: accidents, birth defects, war injuries, debilitating diseases and advanced age.
- One of the most horrific causes of disability worldwide can be attributed to landmines or unexploded ordnance (UXO). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), every year, more than 29,000 people are injured by landmines or UXO around the world. This number does not include unreported cases, or those that are killed by the explosions.
- An estimated 100-150 million people with physical disabilities worldwide need wheelchairs, though less than 1 percent own or have access to one. The number of physically disabled is likely underestimated, due to the difficulty in accounting for "forgotten" citizens who spend their lives hidden from sight.
- It is estimated that the number of people who need wheelchairs will increase by 22 percent over the next 10 years, with the greatest need existing in developing countries.
- In developing countries, only a small percentage of those who need wheelchairs have them, forcing dependence upon family and friends to get around. For others, the only way to get around is to crawl, or lie in a bed or corner of a room for years at a time.
- The wheelchairs provided by the Wheelchair Foundation are purchased in bulk, and designed to be the best possible solution in developing countries. They cost on average \$150 each, delivered by a 280-wheelchair container, and are offered free of charge to those most in need. Each donation of \$75 will be combined by the Wheelchair Foundation, with funds provided specifically for that purpose, to deliver a wheelchair to a developing country. \$21,000 will deliver an entire 280-wheelchair container to a developing country.

## Rotarians expand humanitarian relief on a global scale

### Wheelchair Foundation Australia – South Pacific Focus

**Lyall Hood, Executive Director**

**Member, Rotary Club of Gosford, West**

Wheelchair Foundation Australia (WFA), based in Gosford, NSW, has been working very closely with the Congregational Churches of Australia and Samoa to provide 280 wheelchairs to Samoans without mobility as a first step in a comprehensive humanitarian assistance effort. In partnership with the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) in Australia, WFA has embarked on a program to deliver mobility to 280 members of the Aboriginal community in New South Wales, and through the dedicated efforts of volunteers Vince and Sharon Mamone of the Rotary Club of Dandenong East in Victoria, a 280-wheelchair container is on its way to Fiji. Organized by Victoria Rotarians, the 228km "Wheelchair Push" from Shepparton to Dandenong raised the funds for the wheelchairs, which will greatly improve the lives of physically disabled residents of Fiji.



Harry Melkonian delivering a wheelchair in Papua New Guinea.

### Wheelchair Foundation Canada – Global Outreach Update

**Christiana Flessner, Executive Director**

**President, Rotary Club of Semiahmoo, B.C.**

Wheelchair Foundation Canada (WFC), based in Vancouver, B.C., has coordinated international relief missions with Rotary Clubs and Rotarians in every province of the country, and gained substantial ground in their global relief programs. Working in conjunction with Rotarians, schools, youth groups and volunteers nationwide, WFC has sent 280 wheelchair containers to Sierra Leone, South Africa, Kazakhstan, Iraq, Mexico, St. Lucia and Antigua, among other destinations. In a coordinated effort with Rotarians in districts throughout Zone 22, relief missions are underway to Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Southern Africa, the South Pacific, and to the First Nations population, as well as other needy citizens in British Columbia. "The level of compassion Canadians have for helping people throughout the world touches me again and again," says Christiana Flessner. "I am approached on a daily basis by people who want to help us spread the word about how easy it is to change a person's life with the gift of a new wheelchair."



Rotarian Joan Firkins delivers mobility in Ethiopia.

### Wheelchair Foundation United Kingdom – Building Bridges

**Milton Fray, Trustee Chairman**

**Past District Governor 1040, Yorkshire**

In the process of spreading the word about the work of Wheelchair Foundation United Kingdom (WF-UK), Rotarians throughout Europe are becoming involved in the hands-on delivery of wheelchairs. Duncan Beech, past president of the Wakefield Chantry Club, traveled to Moscow to participate in a wheelchair distribution sponsored by Rotarians in the U.S. and was able to establish relationships with Moscow Rotarians that will facilitate the delivery of more wheelchairs to their area. WF-UK has sponsored the delivery of 1,120 wheelchairs to countries in Southern Africa and has participated in distributions in conjunction with the Rotary and Interact Clubs of Bewdley to Romania. These bridge-building missions will allow Rotarians and their youth groups in the United Kingdom to be more involved with the hands-on humanitarian efforts benefiting citizens in nearby Eastern Europe.



Duncan Beech making friends in Moscow.

## WHEELCHAIRS COMMITTED OR DELIVERED SINCE JUNE 2000

Afghanistan.....	5,800	Latvia.....	740
Albania.....	550	Lebanon.....	2,090
Algeria.....	640	Lesotho.....	500
Angola.....	3,744	Liberia.....	780
Antigua & Barbuda.....	280	Lithuania.....	530
Argentina.....	4,291	Macedonia.....	500
Armenia.....	2,624	Madagascar.....	1,030
Australia.....	292	Malawi.....	2,020
Bahamas.....	920	Malaysia.....	2,260
Bangladesh.....	240	Mali.....	240
Barbados.....	280	Malta.....	240
Belarus.....	990	Marshall Islands.....	140
Belgium.....	280	Mexico.....	43,039
Belize.....	1,860	Micronesia.....	1,390
Bolivia.....	3,244	Moldova.....	1,480
Bosnia-Herzegovina.....	1,290	Mongolia.....	1,040
Botswana.....	848	Montenegro.....	120
Brazil.....	2,305	Morocco.....	800
Bulgaria.....	250	Mozambique.....	1,380
Burundi.....	240	Myanmar.....	500
Cambodia.....	2,270	N. Mariana Islands.....	420
Canada.....	280	Namibia.....	186
Cape Verde.....	500	Nepal.....	1,985
Central African Republic.....	240	Nicaragua.....	4,165
Chile.....	5,828	Niger.....	240
China.....	69,619	Nigeria.....	1,310
China/Hong Kong.....	970	Oman.....	280
China/Taiwan.....	506	Pakistan.....	655
Colombia.....	2,700	Palestinians/Israel.....	1,956
Costa Rica.....	5,095	Panama.....	4,700
Croatia.....	1,550	Papua New Guinea.....	1,240
Cuba.....	1,480	Paraguay.....	1,544
Czech Republic.....	480	Peru.....	3,189
Dominican Republic.....	8,518	Philippines.....	3,660
Ecuador.....	2,761	Poland.....	280
Egypt.....	1,058	Puerto Rico.....	250
El Salvador.....	4,065	Romania.....	2,124
Eritrea.....	250	Russia.....	1,840
Estonia.....	500	Rwanda.....	800
Ethiopia.....	2,928	Samoa.....	800
Fiji.....	500	Senegal.....	240
French Polynesia.....	280	Serbia.....	1,250
Georgia.....	750	Sierra Leone.....	1,560
Ghana.....	1,960	Somalia.....	88
Greece.....	240	South Africa.....	7,700
Grenada.....	280	Spain.....	500
Guam.....	250	Sri Lanka.....	1,050
Guatemala.....	5,353	St. Lucia.....	280
Guyana.....	250	Suriname.....	240
Haiti.....	1,820	Swaziland.....	1,580
Honduras.....	4,344	Syria.....	641
Hungary.....	120	Tajikistan.....	240
India.....	2,791	Tanzania.....	2,188
Indonesia.....	2,300	Thailand.....	3,330
Iran.....	4,160	Tonga.....	500
Iraq.....	2,400	Trinidad & Tobago.....	1,604
Israel.....	4,650	Turkey.....	3,820
Italy.....	560	Turkmenistan.....	240
Jamaica.....	1,880	Uganda.....	2,624
Japan.....	2,250	Ukraine.....	3,628
Jordan.....	3,098	Uruguay.....	1,352
Kazakhstan.....	1,790	USA.....	22,610
Kenya.....	2,260	Uzbekistan.....	1,240
Kiribati.....	250	Vanuatu.....	250
Korea, North.....	140	Venezuela.....	760
Korea, South.....	5,172	Vietnam.....	6,836
Kosovo.....	1,080	Virgin Islands.....	280
Kyrgyzstan.....	1,740	Western Sahara.....	153
Laos.....	780	Zambia.....	400
		Zimbabwe.....	1,550

Total Countries.....136  
Total Wheelchairs..... 357,191

For current totals visit [wheelchairfoundation.org](http://wheelchairfoundation.org).



**WAL-MART REPRESENTATIVES DELIVERING WHEELCHAIRS IN WASHINGTON, D.C.**

### WAL-MART DELIVERS MOBILITY

The Wheelchair Foundation recently received a grant from the Wal-Mart Foundation to sponsor the delivery of 1,000 wheelchairs in the United States. Wal-Mart's "Wheels Across America" initiative is delivering 100 wheelchairs to 10 cities across the country. With Goodwill Industries as our distribution partner in Washington, D.C., New York, Orlando, Atlanta, Chicago, Houston, Dallas, Phoenix, Los Angeles and Oakland, wheelchairs are being distributed to individuals and organizations in need of basic mobility devices. Organizations benefiting from the donation include Children's Hospitals, Centers for Independent Living, the Muscular Dystrophy Association, and churches and hospitals that benefit the lower income residents in their communities.

At a distribution ceremony in Astoria, New York, on March 24, First Lady of New York Libby Pataki said, "Mobility brings freedom. The freedom for physically challenged people to lead the active and rich lives they were meant to lead." Wheelchair Foundation President David Behring said, "Wal-Mart's generosity to its local communities is well-known. This gift will provide hope, mobility and opportunity to 1,000 Americans across our country. It is a wonderful expression of caring and concern."

Through the Wal-Mart Foundation, Wal-Mart provides financial support for community education and scholarships, family health and welfare needs, economic and workforce development programs that benefit our communities, environmental issues,

volunteerism and community-based 501(c)3 organizations. As a major supporter of community initiatives, Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., will contribute more than \$158 million in this year alone to support communities and local nonprofit organizations.

### NEW YORKERS RAISE FUNDS FOR WHEELCHAIRS TO UKRAINE

The Ukrainian Institute of America hosted an educational charity event in New York City to offer hope and independence to physically disabled residents of Ukraine who badly need a wheelchair but cannot afford one. Ms. Orysia Demchenko was the volunteer coordinator of the event, which brought into clear focus the need for wheelchairs within the physically disabled community in Ukraine. The event brought together over 150 members of the Ukrainian community in New York City, who made this event a first step in a commitment to send more humanitarian assistance



**THIS 4-YEAR-OLD UKRAINIAN BOY CAN NOW GO TO PRESCHOOL.**

to residents of Ukraine. First Lady of New York Libby Pataki said at the event, "New York is the most unique community in the world. You have a combination of people and cultures that all come together here in the most philanthropic country on Earth, and they do their absolute best to help the residents in the country of their heritage. It is a wonderful experience for me to witness their generosity."

## Travel and Deliver Wheelchairs

### WHEELED ADVENTURES

#### Providing Mobility to the People of Mexico

The Wheelchair Foundation, in partnership with Howard Tours of Oakland, CA, has designed a series of group-travel experiences where people can personally deliver wheelchairs to those who lack mobility. These distributions will provide enduring memories and emotions, but that will be just the start of the experience. In addition to participating in a hands-on distribution of individual wheelchairs, those who join us will:

- explore the sights, sounds, history and cultures of the countries visited;
- visit additional humanitarian sites and projects;
- build friendships with the people of each land.

#### CURRENT SCHEDULE:

**Historic Mexico City – 5 days for only \$1,274, from Houston**

**Includes airfare, hotel, special events, transfer, etc.**

*For more information about these trips please call the Wheelchair Foundation, or Howard Tours at (800) 475-2260, or e-mail [Travel@HowardTours.net](mailto:Travel@HowardTours.net).*





TEMPE, ARIZONA

# The Model Sister City

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: >>> LOTS OF NEW FRIENDS IN ZHENJIANG. >>> RECIPIENTS WAITING TO GREET US. >>> THE CITY SQUARE WAS GRAND AND BEAUTIFUL. >>> GETTING A WHEELCHAIR HELPS EVERY MEMBER OF THE FAMILY.



Sister city, county and state affiliations between the United States and other nations began shortly after World War II and developed into a national initiative when President Dwight D. Eisenhower proposed the “People to People” initiative at a White House conference in 1956. Originally a part of the National League of Cities, Sister Cities International became a separate non-profit corporation in 1967 due to tremendous growth and popularity.

President Eisenhower’s intention was to involve individuals and organized groups at all levels of society in citizen diplomacy, with the hope that personal relationships, fostered through sister city, county and state affiliations, would lessen the chance of future world conflicts.

Dick Neuheisel has been involved with the Tempe Sister Cities program for 35 years. He has the honor of being its first president, and holds that title to this day. With the participation of some 800 local volunteers, and Tempe Sister Cities vice president Harry Mitchell, Tempe has been able to sponsor the delivery of three 240-wheelchair containers to its sister cities in Skopje, Macedonia, Timbuktu, Mali, and most recently in Zhenjiang, China.

Dick shared his stories of the recent trip to Zhenjiang and the wonderful experience that their delegation of 23 had during the distribution of the wheelchairs. Dick said, “We were welcomed like dignitaries, with a 40-piece band, thousands of spectators in this beautiful city square, and 240 wheelchair recipients waiting to greet us in their brand new wheelchairs. We shook the people’s hands, some hugged us, and my wife had tears streaming down her cheeks the whole time. It was so touching to see the gratitude and affection from these wonderful people. The people told us their stories through our interpreter, and we learned that many had not been out of their homes

for 5 to 8 years because they could not afford a wheelchair. This day proved to me that we are able to make a difference in people’s lives, and the world, and it is a wonderful blessing.”

Christina Cenzano and her husband also made the trip, and she said, “The most moving experience for us was this man who had received a wheelchair and was completely in tears. I realized at that moment that this was real, and we were having a profound impact on the quality of these people’s lives.” *continued on page 15*

## Wheelchairs in China

The Wheelchair Foundation/Sister Cities “Wheelchairs for China” program can now deliver wheelchairs in China for a donation of only \$60 per wheelchair. These wheelchairs can be delivered in minimum quantities of 100 per destination, and up in increments of 50 to whatever number is desired.

**For more information, please contact Matt Montague, Wheelchair Foundation Director of Community Relations at (925) 791-2316 or [mmontague@wheelchairfoundation.org](mailto:mmontague@wheelchairfoundation.org), or Erica Smith, SCI Special Projects Coordinator at (202) 347-4877 or [esmith@sister-cities.org](mailto:esmith@sister-cities.org).**

# Assisting Iraq

THE HEALING PROCESS BEGINS FOR THOSE  
IN NEED OF RELIEF

Through the public/private partnership between the Wheelchair Foundation and the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Defense, we are able to sponsor the delivery of life-changing wheelchairs to countries in dire need of mobility devices throughout the world. The greatest need remains in countries that have been involved in civil wars and armed conflict resulting in the proliferation of landmines and unexploded ordnance that remain in astronomical numbers. One of the most seriously affected countries has been Iraq, with an estimated 7 million landmines laid between the Kurdish north and southern Iraq over the past 20 years. These, and literally millions of pieces of unexploded ordnance that litter the country kill and physically disable thousands of people each year.

The following is a report received from our wheelchair distribution partner in Iraq. Life for Relief and Development is a dedicated Non-Governmental Organization working to improve the quality of lives in Iraq.

## Wheelchair Distribution Report—Submitted by Dr. Yarub Al-Shiraida

For more than a decade, the Iraqi society has been subjected to very negative conditions, which undoubtedly will affect its future for many years to come.

Iraq has experienced very difficult and tragic circumstances that severely impact the downtrodden and marginalized weaker groups. Among these groups are the physically disabled, whose suffering is multiplied in an unprecedented manner.

The physically disabled have endured suffering on multiple levels, including deprivation and neglect, while also enduring the detrimental effects manifested through various illnesses and conditions derived from exposure to harmful conditions, like landmines and unexploded ordnance, existing within the same environment where they must reside and seek care.

Therefore, a key role of the humanitarian NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) is to address the conditions of the physically disabled through support and education for the individual, their families and the society as a whole. These important steps are required for rehabilitating and merging the physically disabled into the mainstream, thereby assisting an important segment to restore its activity and ability to participate in all aspects of the society.



ABOVE: >>> ROTARIANS IN NORTH AMERICA HAVE GREATLY IMPROVED THE LIVES OF IRAQIS WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES. BELOW, LEFT TO RIGHT: >>> WHEELCHAIR DISTRIBUTION IN BAGHDAD. >>> ENTIRE FAMILIES BENEFIT FROM THE GIFT OF A WHEELCHAIR. >>> WHEELCHAIRS WERE GIVEN TO YOUNG CHILDREN, TEENS AND ADULTS. >>> MANY CHILDREN CAN NOW ATTEND SCHOOL.

Through dedication, awareness and empathy, the Wheelchair Foundation and its partners have continued to lead by example, and taken up the cause of improving the plight of many physically disabled in Iraq. Because of the very generous donations from Rotary Clubs and Rotarians in the U.S. and Canada, Life for Relief and Development has received four 280-wheelchair containers from the Wheelchair Foundation. These 1,120 wheelchairs have made a tremendous impact on improving the lives of many Iraqis.

The first container arrived in late 2003. These wheelchairs were distributed primarily in the Baghdad area and several other cities. The next three containers arrived during the first half of the year 2004. Herein, we shall report details pertaining to the distribution of these wheelchairs.

*(continued on page 15)*





# season highlights



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: >>> Smiles and hope for an easier life are part of receiving wheelchairs. >>> Cliff and Mary Elaina Dochterman find true happiness helping others in China. >>> A new wheelchair and a free hat, all in one day! >>> Secretary of Health and Human Services Mike Leavitt and his wife, Jackie, join Ken Behring to distribute wheelchairs in Utah. >>> Noah's VP of Operations Dan Dominguez (left) is joined by Chris Lewis, Wheelchair Foundation President David Behring, and the Contra Costa Professional Firefighters in distributing over 650 wheelchairs provided by Noah's Bagels.



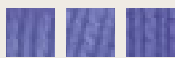




CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: >>> Rotary Interact members deliver wheelchairs and friendship in Mazatlan. >>> Former congressman and football star Steve Largent helped to bring mobility to residents in Izcalli, Mexico. >>> Major League Baseball star Sammy Sosa delivers wheelchairs in his home country, the Dominican Republic. >>> Knights of Columbus change lives in Mexicali. >>> Libby Pataki sharing a touching moment in the Dominican Republic. >>> Wheelchairs being unloaded in Mexico. >>> Councilwoman Becky Haskin and Executive Director Mae Ferguson from Ft. Worth Sister Cities deliver mobility in Mbabane, Swaziland. >>> A wheelchair makes travel so much easier in Hanoi. >>> A new way to go out together in South Africa.







# Youth and Philanthropy

**YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGHOUT NORTH AMERICA GET ACTIVE  
TO HELP MAKE LIFE EASIER FOR OTHERS**

At the very beginning of the Wheelchair Foundation in early 2000, the first images shared with the world were of children in far-off countries receiving wheelchairs. These wheelchairs brought huge smiles to tiny faces and to every member of their family. In the telling of our story and how we were improving lives with the tangible gift of a basic mobility wheelchair, we began striking a chord in the hearts and minds of young people throughout North America.

Before long we were receiving letters, photos and donations from elementary school classes that had made it their project to raise the \$75 needed to sponsor a wheelchair, and then their great delight when they actually raised enough for five or six. Middle schools, high schools and college students were becoming involved, and their creativity in coming up with ways to raise money for wheelchairs was astounding and often hilarious.

The Lisgar Interact Club, high school-aged members of the Rotary Club of Ottawa, Canada, raised \$440 with a “Kiss the Fish” fundraiser for wheelchairs. The concept was that various teachers from their high school had their names written on glass jars. Students



would put money into the jar of the teacher that they wanted to see kiss the fish. The top three jars with the most money were put in order of first, second and third place. The first place winner would have to kiss the fish for 15 seconds, second place for 10 seconds and third place for five seconds. This was a televised festive event in Ottawa, and no teachers or carp were injured in the raising of these funds.

But kids raising money to help the less fortunate is nothing new. From the earliest days of the “March of Dimes” campaign in 1938, when comedian Eddie Cantor said on national radio that Americans should send dimes directly to the White House to fight polio, children became very involved in collecting money to combat the epidemic. The “MDA Backyard Carnivals” started in the 1960s by the Muscular Dystrophy Association involved children in a fun

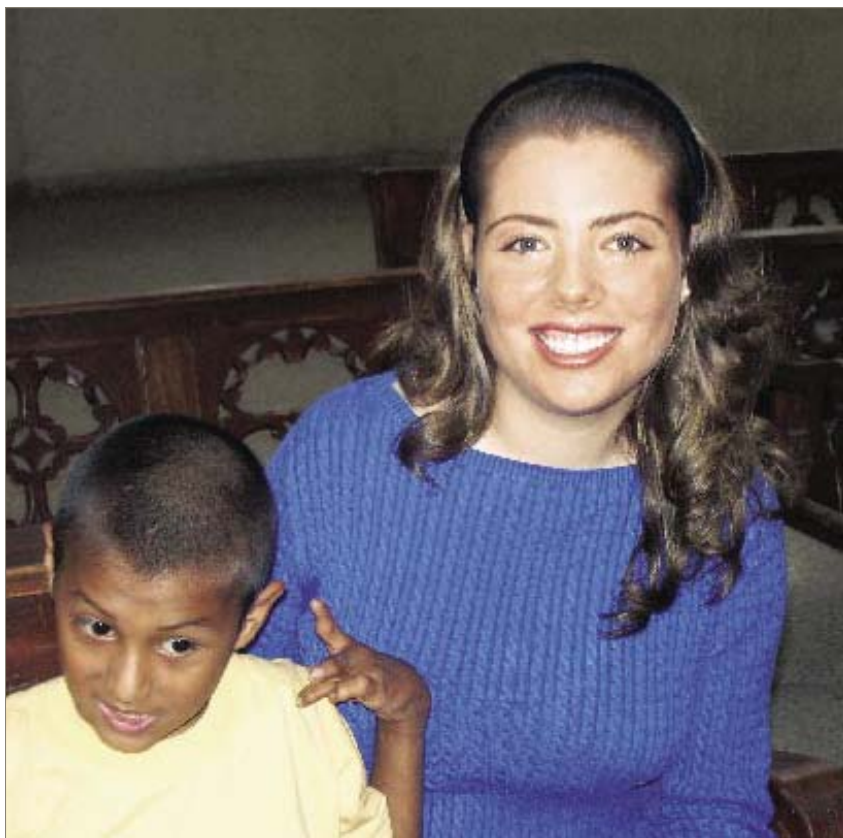


and creative way to help kids with neuromuscular diseases.

In Selma, Alabama, the fourth grade students at the Morgan Academy have raised enough money to sponsor 97 wheelchairs over the past three years. Teacher Amy Coffee says that the program started in conjunction with the Rotary Club of Selma, which has been very committed to the Wheelchair Foundation program. Since March of 2001 Rotary Clubs, Districts and Rotarians worldwide have sponsored the delivery of more than 100,000 wheelchairs to over 100 countries, and have been

OPPOSITE PAGE: >>> The six pupils of a small country school in the sandhills of Nebraska held a “Czech Festival” and raised enough money to sponsor four wheelchairs to the Czech Republic.  
THIS PAGE, TOP: >>> Michelle Anita van der Schyff experiences humanitarian service in South Africa.  
BOTTOM: >>> These fourth graders in Selma, Alabama, are the reason 97 people now have wheelchairs.





instrumental in exposing their humanitarian efforts to affiliated youth groups, students and children in their local communities.

While visiting her parents on a break from Brigham Young University, Julie Anne Springman read an article in *Diablo* magazine about the Wheelchair Foundation. She decided upon her return to school to try and raise the \$21,000 necessary to sponsor a 280-wheelchair container to Lima, Peru, where she knew of the great need for mobility from friends. Julie rallied family, friends, local businesses and anyone that would let her speak about her goal to raise a container of wheelchairs, and in five months succeeded in raising the funds necessary to change 280 lives in Peru. Julie and her mom traveled to Peru to help distribute the wheelchairs with the Rotary Club of Huacho, and declared it to be a life-changing experience. The level of hospitality and gratitude of the people touched her the most, and now she is being asked to share her experience by teachers at BYU. Julie said, "This really put life into perspective for me, and I would love to do it all again."

In Pretoria, South Africa, 12-year-old Michelle Anita van der Schyff attended a wheelchair distribution sponsored by her grandparent's Rotary Club. Michelle said, "I couldn't believe how many people needed wheelchairs. There were young kids, teenagers and elders, and I felt very sorry for them. But as soon as they got a wheelchair, they were smiling, and I even heard them laugh. That made me realize that I want to help the Rotarians have more functions like this so more people will be glad."

Currently a freshman at the University of California at Berkeley, Lia Marshall was the spearhead of Rotary Interact District 5170's wheelchair fund-raising program last year, which involved some 40 Interact clubs in the San Francisco Bay Area. Mobilizing high school students to participate in a series of events like a wheelchair marathon, a jog-a-thon, a pie-your-teacher-in-the-face competition, and Christmas caroling, the result was \$47,250 raised to send 630 wheelchairs to Costa Rica, Guatemala and Panama. Lia, joined by her parents Ed and Anita, members of the Rotary Club of Alameda, traveled to Costa Rica with other Interact members and Rotarians involved in the campaign to hand-deliver wheelchairs that their hard work had provided.







# Sri Lanka— December 26, 2004



**"THERE IS NOTHING GREATER ON THIS  
EARTH THAN HUMAN LIFE."**

**—WILSON KIMBALL**



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: >>> AT THE HEIGHT OF  
THE TSUNAMI. >>> A LOCAL FISHERMAN HAD TO  
CLIMB THIS COCONUT TREE TO AVOID BEING SWEEP  
TAWAY. >>> DEBRIS BEING TAKEN OUT TO SEA. >>>  
THE HOTEL LOBBY AFTER THE WATER RECEDED.**

**W**ilson Kimball, executive director of the Wheelchair Foundation New York office, was in Sri Lanka for a wheelchair distribution in late December. The following is the story of her experience as witness to the tsunami disaster that struck that country one day after Christmas.

On December 18, the Wheelchair Foundation and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints gave a wheelchair to a 104-year-old woman in Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. M.P. Mary Nona was surrounded by her 14 children, grandchildren and great grandchildren when she received her new wheelchair. At the distribution, a volunteer for LDS Charities said, "There is nothing greater on this earth than human life." I will never forget his comment, because only eight days later I was witness to one of the most destructive natural disasters in recorded history, a disaster that would take over 250,000 precious lives and injure countless more.

Sunday, December 26, 2004, was a full moon day, which meant that the tides were going to be especially low and especially high. I didn't know that when I woke up at 7 a.m. I just knew that I was feeling what I thought was my first earthquake. When we went down to breakfast my sister-in-law, Carol, asked if anyone else had felt the tremors. I told her I had, and we wondered what it was from, but we quickly dismissed it so that we could discuss our trip to the beach. We were going as day guests to The Blue Water Hotel in Wadduwa, about an hour south of Colombo, the capital.

When we arrived at the hotel, we checked in at the front desk and then proceeded to the beach. There were about a hundred locals on the beach. No one was swimming. They were looking out at the ocean, which had receded. A few guys were using palm fronds to swat at the huge numbers of crabs that were running wild on the beach, and a local fishing boat seemed to be caught just offshore unable to row out or in. Someone com-

mented on the low tide, and someone else said it was so low because it was a full moon day. I asked my father-in-law if that was normal, and he said he had never seen it so low.

The next thing we know, the fishing boat is being pulled onto the beach. All of the locals were rushing out to help bring in the nets and secure the boat against three coconut trees. Everyone was working frantically. Carol and I walked down to watch their efforts and see if we could help, but the [hotel] manager shooed us away. One of the hotel employees caught a crab, because there were now hundreds of them running all over the beach and the grass. He laughed at how it jumped out of his hands, and we watched the water recede.

All along the edge of the hotel, the staff was standing nervously watching the ocean. I watched several workmen pack up the lounge chairs and carry them into the hotel. What could be happening? The crew that had brought in the fishing boat was now heading toward us, and the manager of the hotel was now accompanied by a man with a bullhorn. "Is he actually going to use that thing?" someone asked. It seemed so unnecessary.

Then it was necessary. The manager blew his whistle and told everyone to run upstairs. We ran up to the first floor. In a somewhat orderly but scared way we raced up another flight of stairs to the second floor. Then we all poured onto a terrace to watch the water come in. One of the fishermen was caught unaware and had to climb a palm tree. We watched the water tear through the buildings and out the other side of



the hotel. Then, just like that, it started to recede, carrying with it leather armchairs and furniture.

We stood on the terrace for a few minutes trying to gather our thoughts. Then our driver came up the stairs to find us. He told us we had to leave now. We rushed down the stairs. We walked through the lobby and out the other side, where the ground was higher. We jumped into the van and headed for Colombo, unsure if the roads were passable. On the way we passed many families that were carrying their belongings. I was especially aware of the people carrying out their loved ones with physical disabilities, and pushing them into the backs of cars, onto bicycles and into the backs of trucks. Some people were carrying their possessions on their heads, and others were trying to lead their goats, dogs and cows away on leashes.

We learned later that thousands had lost their lives—the hotel manager was responsible for saving ours. The day that started out with my first earthquake would end up being a life-altering experience for every witness of the tsunami disaster, and for millions of people around the world. There is truly nothing greater on this earth than human life.

It is very gratifying to me personally that the Wheelchair Foundation is now very involved in the relief effort in countries affected by this natural disaster.

### *Sister Cities, continued from page 6*

Through the “U.S./Iraq International Partners for Peace Initiative,” Tempe will be sponsoring wheelchairs to Iraq, and then working to send more wheelchairs to its sister cities.

In 2002, Sister Cities International and the Wheelchair Foundation embarked on a five-year “Wheelchairs for Peace” initiative to distribute wheelchairs to sister city communities throughout the world. We are very pleased to have so many supportive communities working throughout the U.S. to help bring our humanitarian mission of hope, mobility and freedom to sister cities throughout the world, and we thank Sister Cities International for making its “People to People” initiative a shining example of what we all can do on a local level to assist our global community.

### *Iraq, continued from page 7*

The wheelchairs were distributed nationwide in all provinces throughout Iraq. The populations of the cities and the current situation were taken into account when formulating the plan. Life coordinated the distribution of the wheelchairs with different local NGOs specializing in work with the physically disabled. Included among these NGOs were the Iraqi Handicapped Society in Baghdad and other cities, Al-Namaa Relief Society in Kirkuk, Al-Hayat Society for Handicaps in Babylon, The Handicaps of Iraq Society in Baghdad, The Iraqi Society for Humanitarian Assistance in Baghdad and others.

#### The following table explains the distribution of the wheelchairs:

NO.	CITY	QUANTITY	COMMENT
1	Baghdad	82	Received more wheelchairs from 1st shipment
2	Musil	50	
3	Basrah	50	
4	Diyalah	64	
5	Kirkuk	40	
6	Najaf	60	
7	Falluja	100	Because of great need
8	Diwaniya	63	Diwaniya and Mahnawiya district
9	Sulaimaniya	30	Kurdish area
10	Arbil	30	Kurdish area
11	Duhuk	30	Kurdish area
12	Ramadi	30	
13	Salahuddin	31	
14	Babylon	30	
15	Karbala	30	
16	Missan	30	
17	Nasiriya	30	
18	Samawa	30	
19	Kut	30	
<b>Total:</b>		<b>840</b>	

On behalf of Life for Relief and Development and the people of Iraq, and particularly the physically disabled community, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Rotarians in North America and the Wheelchair Foundation and all of its partners. The Iraqi disabled community is still in need of many more wheelchairs. An estimate from the Ministry of Health states that Iraq needs thousands of wheelchairs per year. It is our hope that we can take the steps necessary to help these people.

With sincere gratitude,  
Dr. Yarub Al-Shiraida  
International Programs Coordinator-Iraq

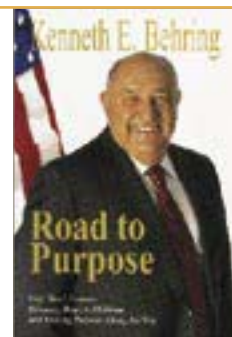
Please visit our website  
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EACH \$75 DONATION WILL DELIVER A WHEELCHAIR  
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CHILD, TEEN OR ADULT WITHOUT MOBILITY. YOU WILL  
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