

WINTER 2005

Changing

THE WORLD



giving the gift

OF MOBILITY



A MESSAGE FROM KEN BEHRING



I was out of the country participating in several wheelchair distributions throughout the world when I heard the horrifying news about Hurricane Katrina. I couldn't believe the video footage and interviews I saw and read about in the news. It was difficult for me to grasp that all of the devastation I was seeing was happening at home in the United States.

It has been wonderful to see the country pull together and unite in a joint effort to support those states on the gulf coast that were devastated. I'm proud to say the Wheelchair Foundation is doing all that we can to help out. Over 1,000 wheelchairs have already been sent and another 2,200 are on the way. I'd like to thank all those individuals, groups, and organizations that have helped get wheelchairs down to that area so quickly.

It's hard to imagine that just over five years ago the Wheelchair Foundation was established. Now here we are five years later and we've worked together to distribute more than 400,000 wheelchairs in over 135 countries. Thousands of lives have been changed for the better and I've been able to witness this first hand. I love participating in the wheelchair distribution ceremonies. The part I enjoy the most is meeting and shaking the hands of the wheelchair recipients. Most of the time there is a language barrier between the recipients and me, which you would probably think poses problems, but I want you to know that the tear-filled eyes and long handshakes make it very easy for me to understand what they are saying. The gratitude and appreciation expressed to me at the wheelchair distributions is something I wish each one of you could personally experience.

The holiday season is a time to give thanks for all the ways that we have been blessed and to give thanks for all that we've been able to accomplish. It is also a time to give gifts to those for whom we care so much. I invite you to sponsor a wheelchair in the name of a family member, friend, or loved one. With your \$75 donation, you can sponsor a wheelchair on behalf of someone you care about. We will send that special someone a beautiful presentation folder as a holiday gift from you. It's the perfect gift!

I want to personally thank each one of you for your generosity and support of the Wheelchair Foundation. Without you this would not be possible.

Happy Holidays,

Kenneth E. Behring
Founder & Chairman of the Board

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 one 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 his/her 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.

Wheelchair Foundation

"Serving the World"



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responding to the need on the Gulf Coast

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: WHEELCHAIRS ARE PUT TO IMMEDIATE USE >>> FLOODING CAUSED EVACUATION PROBLEMS FOR ALL >>> UNLOADING WHEELCHAIRS IN HOUSTON >>> BUILDINGS AND HOMES WERE LEVELLED >>> THE LIVES OF FAMILIES ARE IMPROVED AT THE IMPERIAL PALACE IN BILOXI, MISSISSIPPI >>> MOBILITY IS RESTORED >>> WATERS WERE THREE FEET HIGH IN SOME AREAS

The Wheelchair Foundation is sending approximately 3,200 wheelchairs to help those displaced by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. This is in response to requests from several agencies in the hurricane-affected area, including the Houston Center for Independent Living. Linda Beeson of that organization said simply, “We’re in desperate need of wheelchairs.” The Wheelchair Foundation has already sent 280 wheelchairs to the Center.

Nearly one million people were displaced by the storms. Ms. Beeson said, “Thousands had to leave their wheelchairs in order to escape the devastation of the flood. We are very grateful for the 280 wheelchairs we received, but are in immediate need of hundreds more.” The Houston Center for Independent Living is sheltering evacuees mainly from New Orleans. Many of them may not be able to return home, as their homes and all their possessions were destroyed. Many also lost their wheelchairs.



Of the one million displaced people, tens of thousands are physically disabled or senior citizens or both. Many of them had no choice but to abandon their wheelchairs in order to board crowded buses to flee the storms. They now find themselves far from home without the ability to even get around. In addition to all their other losses, they’ve lost their mobility. Their need for fundamental movement, just to conduct their daily business, is nearly overwhelming. The Wheelchair Foundation and its sponsors are helping to meet that need.

Wheelchairs sponsored by the J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Family Foundation were donated to evacuees in the Washington, DC area. This was part of a shipment the Wheelchair Foundation put in motion months earlier. It was fortunate that there were wheelchairs available when people displaced were moved to Washington, DC following hurricane Katrina. Evacuees in several of the affected states were given wheelchairs sponsored by the Wheelchair Foundation Southeast of Ft. Lauderdale, Florida and the Imperial Palace Hotel of Las Vegas, Nevada, through Wheelchair Foundation Nevada. The Imperial Palace has sponsored over 1,500 new wheelchairs to go to those in need in Mississippi alone, and more will follow. Swift Transportation,

Southwest Airlines, and Pan Western Transportation Specialists were all responsible for the transportation of the wheelchairs from various parts of the U.S. down to the Gulf States.

Wheelchair Foundation president David Behring said, “We are shipping every available wheelchair in our inventory to Louisiana, Mississippi and other states to help our fellow Americans in this time of crisis. We are also seeking contributions to speed orders for additional wheelchairs.” The Wheelchair Foundation has already placed several large orders with its factories to manufacture new wheelchairs to replace those left behind in the haste to escape the hurricanes. With your help, more orders will follow.

Numerous organizations and government agencies are doing everything they can to help. Donations to charitable organizations following Katrina hit a record high. Within three weeks, over \$1.2 billion had been given by generous Americans. The Wheelchair Foundation is joining in the relief efforts and seeks your help. Every \$150 donation will ship a brand new wheelchair to the organizations helping the victims of these disasters. If you would like to send a check, please make it payable to “Wheelchair Foundation Katrina Relief.” To view more photos and to read more information about the work the Wheelchair Foundation has done to help those in need, please visit our website at www.wheelchair-foundation.org.

Please visit our website

WWW.WHEELCHAIRFOUNDATION.ORG for:

- Donation, Matching Gift Program, and Planned Giving
- International Board of Advisors
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Upcoming Events
- Our Annual Report
- Travel to Wheelchair Distributions
- Team Contact Information
- Videos

Or call us toll-free (877) 378-3839



a teenager's trip to China

By Crystal Walters



FROM UPPER LEFT CLOCKWISE: CRYSTAL WALTERS RECEIVING ONE OF HER MANY "SHEI, SHEI'S" >>> FROM WOODEN STOOLS TO A WHEELCHAIR >>> DAVE WALTERS MEETING THE WHEELCHAIR RECIPIENTS OPPOSITE: MOTHER NO LONGER HAS TO CARRY HER SON THANKS TO HIS NEW WHEELCHAIR >>> CHILDREN'S MARCHING BAND ATTENDED THE WHEELCHAIR DISTRIBUTION

Crystal Walters, an 18-year-old student, accompanied by her parents, on her first trip to China. Her experiences are described below.

“**S**hei, shei”. Two of the most meaningful words I ever heard in my life. I knelt down silently, a tiny hand like a lotus blossom placed inside mine. She looked down at me, tears filling her eyes, flowing down her snow-white cheeks. She looked as fragile as a doll. She repeated those words many times, wanting to but unable to say more. I wanted to tell her that those two words were the most meaningful things I could ever hear. “Shei, shei,” she said between sobs. “Thank you.”

Our first stop in China was the city of Jiujiang, a crowded city of several million people in the providence of Jiangxi. When the bus first pulled up to the wheelchair distribution, I was amazed at

how many people I saw. People were carrying their physically disabled loved ones on their backs and on wooden chairs.

I was startled when I saw a number of children near the front of the group, each of them in his/her new wheelchair. I guess I wasn't prepared to see children so young stricken with immobility. I then realized that the girl before me with legs paralyzed since birth, who had never moved freely a day in her life, could easily have been me.

I went over to a small boy who sat up proudly when he saw me coming. His grandmother was standing behind him, smiling. I shook his grandma's hand and knelt down beside him, and took his small hand in mine. “Nehow,” I said, one of the few Chinese words I knew, “Hello.” He replied in a rush of Chinese, smiling from ear to ear. I looked up at Eugene, our translator, “He says he wants to thank you for his wheelchair. Now he can go out and play with his friends.”

WHEELCHAIRS COMMITTED OR DELIVERED SINCE 2000

Afghanistan	5,800	Liberia	780
Albania	550	Lithuania	1,090
Algeria	640	Macedonia	480
Angola	3,784	Madagascar	1,030
Antigua and Barbuda	280	Malawi	1,920
Argentina	4,851	Malaysia	2,260
Armenia	2,404	Mali	240
Australia	292	Malta	240
Bahamas	920	Marshall Islands	140
Bangladesh	240	Mexico	46,029
Barbados	280	Micronesia	1,390
Belarus	990	Moldova	1,480
Belgium	280	Monaco	560
Belize	1,860	Mongolia	1,040
Bolivia	3,524	Montenegro	120
Bosnia-Herzegovina	1,480	Morocco	2,030
Botswana	1,128	Mozambique	1,380
Brazil	2,305	N. Mariana Islands	410
Bulgaria	250	Myanmar (Burma)	500
Burundi	240	Namibia	186
Cambodia	2,270	Nepal	1,985
Canada	280	Nicaragua	4,445
Cape Verde	780	Niger	240
Central African Rep.	240	Nigeria	1,310
Chile	6,668	Oman	280
China	98,544	Pakistan	1,215
Colombia	4,100	Palestinians/Israel	1,906
Costa Rica	5,095	Panama	4,460
Croatia	1,300	Papua New Guinea	1,240
Cuba	1,240	Paraguay	1,544
Cyprus	280	Peru	5,080
Czech Republic	597	Philippines	3,660
Dominican Republic	7,898	Poland	1,040
Ecuador	3,933	Portugal	250
Egypt	1,058	Puerto Rico	490
El Salvador	4,305	Romania	2,124
Eritrea	250	Russia	2,110
Estonia	500	Rwanda	800
Ethopia	2,928	Saint Lucia (UK)	280
Fiji	1,060	Samoa	800
French Polynesia	280	Senegal	240
Georgia	1,030	Serbia	1,250
Ghana	1,960	Sierra Leone	1,840
Greece	240	Somalia	88
Grenada	280	South Africa	9,960
Guam	250	Spain	500
Guatemala	5,663	Sri Lanka	1,520
Guyana	250	Suriname	240
Haiti	1,820	Swaziland	1,580
Honduras	4,904	Syria	641
Hong Kong	970	Taiwan	756
Hungary	120	Tajikistan	240
India	2,716	Tanzania	2,188
Indonesia	2,260	Thailand	4,700
Iran	3,880	Tibet	331
Iraq	2,400	Tonga	500
Israel	4,650	Trinidad & Tobago	1,604
Italy	560	Turkey	4,040
Jamaica	1,880	Turkmenistan	240
Japan	1,750	Uganda	2,624
Jordan	3,908	Ukraine	3,628
Kazakhstan	1,510	United States	25,950
Kenya	2,260	Uruguay	1,632
Kiribati	250	Uzbekistan	1,240
Korea, North	552	Vanuatu	250
Korea, South	4,900	Venezuela	1,040
Kosovo	1,300	Vietnam	8,736
Kyrgyzstan	1,240	Virgin Islands (UK)	284
Laos	780	Virgin Islands (US)	280
Latvia	740	Western Sahara	153
Lebanon	2,150	Zambia	960
Lesotho	500	Zimbabwe	2,050

TOTAL COUNTRIES 143

TOTAL WHEELCHAIRS 413,236

For current totals visit wheelchairfoundation.org.

“You’re welcome,” I replied, not really knowing what else to say. He spoke again, never taking his eyes off me. Eugene laughed.

“What did he say?” I asked.

“The boy believes you are his American auntie,” Eugene told me.

I smiled. “Yes,” I replied looking at the boy, “I am your auntie.”

The next girl I saw had a difficult time lifting her head. Her father told us that she was born three months premature. When I took her hand, she grasped on to me tightly. It seemed like she was afraid to let go. “How old are you?” I asked her. Her father answered for her.

“Fourteen.” Eugene translated.

“Fourteen!” I said, stunned. “She looks no more than nine years old!”

“Yes,” Eugene said nodding. “Many of the children are, how you say? Not fed?”

“Malnourished,” I said to myself quietly.

He nodded, “Her life is better now, though. She is much better than she was three months ago. She is eating now.”

I couldn’t believe what I was hearing. In my 17 years, the closest I had ever felt to hunger was when I forgot to bring lunch on a four-hour hike. I couldn’t imagine going to sleep hungry every night.

Eugene tapped me on the shoulder. “There is another girl here who would like to meet you.” I nodded and went over to the girl. She was wearing a bright red sweater and a jeweled barrette in her hair. “Thank you very much,” she said in perfect English.

I stared at her. “Where did you learn to speak English so well?”

“She is a very good student,” Eugene translated for us. “Very good grades. She wants to go to America one day and speak English to everybody. She says that the wheelchair will help her in her studies. It will help her speak English even better.”

We went around talking to the recipients and their family or friends. Many of the people were crying, telling us how grateful they were, and how the wheelchairs will change their lives. One elderly woman grabbed my hand and shook it so hard that I thought it would fall off. She sobbed, tears rolling down her round cheeks. “My pain and suffering is finally over,” she told us.

At the end of the ceremony, a children’s marching band started to play a few songs for our enjoyment. The band members were all under the age of 11 and were too adorable for words.

My heart broke as I said goodbye to those people. Their faces and smiles will forever be with me. “Shei, shei,” I said quietly, unable to keep my tears from flowing as the bus drove us away. “You have forever changed my life,” I said smiling. “Thank you.”





FROM TOP LEFT TO BOTTOM RIGHT THIS PAGE: THE ROTARY + INTERACT CLUBS OF BEWDLEY, ENGLAND RAISED FUNDS TO SEND 560 WHEELCHAIRS TO ROMANIA >>> THE ELDERLY ARE ABLE TO GO TO CHURCH AGAIN >>> GATHERING AT A LOCAL CHURCH TO RECEIVE WHEELCHAIRS >>> INTERACTORS OPENING AND ORGANIZING THE WHEELCHAIRS IN ROMANIA

embracing Eastern Europe

From the earliest days of the Wheelchair Foundation back in the year 2000, Eastern Europe has been known to be a destination in great need of wheelchairs. There are many challenges facing the people in countries like Bosnia & Herzegovina and Croatia due to the enormous number of landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) left behind after years of civil war, and the overall health care systems in many countries are just not geared towards assisting people with physical disabilities as a priority.

Numerous religious and relief agencies are operating in this region and are making a big difference in the quality of life for people without mobility.

COUNTRY – BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA

POPULATION - 4 MILLION

Bosnia & Herzegovina has more landmines and UXO than any other country in Eastern Europe. During the 1992-1995 civil war between Bosnian Muslims, Croats and Serbs, millions of landmines were used to protect troops and infrastructure from the opposing armies. Frightened by the threat of injury or death, many people have never returned to their homes, and children are not allowed to roam freely outside. The war inflicted great psychological damage on many people and has made reconstruction a great challenge. For people with physical disabilities, there are a number of other challenges. For physically disabled orphans of the war, war vets, and the elderly, the Wheelchair Foundation is working with the International Orthodox Christian Charity (IOCC) and others to give the gift of mobility to these people.

The IOCC acts as our Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) agent throughout Bosnia & Herzegovina and identifies the recipients of wheelchairs that have been sponsored by Rotary clubs in the U.S., the National Philoptochos Society and several other religious organizations. Because of a lack of government resources for programs designed to help the victims of war, NGOs like the IOCC and the Wheelchair Foundation are carrying as much of the burden as possible.

COUNTRY – LITHUANIA

POPULATION – 3.5 MILLION

After declaring its independence from the Soviet Union in 1990, Lithuania began restructuring its country and economy. Part of the country's overhaul has been attention to its health care system and the needs of citizens with physical disabilities.

Wheelchair Foundation Canada, working with the Rotary Club of Calgary and the Wild Rose Foundation of Alberta, sponsored 560 wheelchairs to serve the immediate needs of people with no other means to receive a wheelchair. The Rotary Club of Vilnius is coordinating countrywide distributions and hopes that these wheel-



chairs will provide the mobility that is critically needed by many families that have nowhere else to turn.

COUNTRY – ROMANIA

POPULATION – 22 MILLION

Romania has struggled to emerge from the post-Soviet era with a government dedicated to establish economic reforms and a decrease in political corruption. Numerous political parties have swung the balance of power dramatically in the past decade, but few have put much importance on assistance to the elderly and citizens with physical disabilities.

Wheelchair Foundation UK, in conjunction with the Rotary and Interact Clubs of Bewdley, raised funds to send 560 wheelchairs to be distributed by the Romanian Red Cross. A group of Interact students and Rotarians traveled to Romania to participate in the hands-on distribution of the wheelchairs in Bucharest and Ploiesti. The students were very creative in raising the funds for this relief mission, including one girl who jumped out of an airplane to raise money for wheelchairs. First-hand experience of changing people's lives with the gift of mobility will last a long time in the memories of every person that traveled from the UK to Romania for this distribution.

COUNTRY – POLAND

POPULATION – 38.5 MILLION

In recent years the Polish economy has continued to develop and prosper; so much so, that Poland was able to join the European Union in 2004. But health care and assistance for the elderly and physically disabled are still being updated. There are many modern conveniences being established in large cities, but in ancient towns and villages, mobility and access for the physically disabled is nearly non-existent.

Recently, The Wheelchair Foundation delivered 840 wheelchairs to the Warsaw region and the city of Wadowice, best known as the birthplace of Pope John Paul II. Two 280-wheelchair containers were sponsored by the Sister City organizations of Columbia Heights, Minnesota, and Chicago, Illinois. Another container was sponsored by a private donor. The Rotary Club of Warsaw acted as the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) which coordinated the distributions in conjunction with local organizations that assist the elderly and physically disabled.



COUNTRY – UKRAINE

POPULATION – 47 MILLION

Emerging from the Soviet era health care system into the 21st century has been an enormous challenge for the people of Ukraine. Fortunately, the United States is the melting pot of the world, and also enjoys the number one rank as the most philanthropic country on earth. U.S. residents whose families originated or still live in Ukraine have dedicated sincere efforts to help the residents of their home country.

In New York City, the Ukrainian community and the Ukrainian American Institute came together with the Wheelchair Foundation of New York to raise funds for wheelchairs to be sent to Ukraine. Five hundred sixty wheelchairs were recently delivered at ceremonies that included Ukrainian First Lady Kateryna Yushchenko and First Lady of New York Libby Pataki, and brought greater public awareness to the need for mobility in the lives of many thousands of Ukrainian citizens.



COUNTRY – RUSSIA

POPULATION – 143 MILLION

Over the past several years, the Wheelchair Foundation has distributed several thousand wheelchairs to physically disabled residents of Russia. The great challenge, however, has been in the distribution of the wheelchairs. Recently, the Wheelchair Foundation established a relationship with a former Soviet factory for medical devices. This factory, located in St. Petersburg, is now capable of building and shipping wheelchairs throughout Russia with a great level of quality and reliability. We have been very pleased with their performance.

The Russian railway network is allowing us to deliver wheelchairs efficiently throughout the Russian Federation, and now opens the door to sponsors that are interested in helping Russian people with physical disabilities.

OVERVIEW

The need for wheelchairs in the Eastern European region is great. In countries that are affected by landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO), the percentage of people with physical disabilities that need a wheelchair but cannot afford one can exceed ten percent. In other countries, our research over the past five and a half years tells us that approximately three percent of the population of most developing countries fall into the category of “in need of a wheelchair but cannot afford one.”

The Wheelchair Foundation is grateful to our sponsoring partners for their continuing efforts to bring mobility into the lives of citizens in Eastern Europe.

FROM LOWER LEFT TO TOP RIGHT. >>> Mayor Gary Peterson and Dolores Strand from the Columbia Heights, Minnesota Sister Cities distributing wheelchairs in Lomianki, Poland. >>> Wheelchair Foundation United Kingdom working closely with Rotary clubs throughout the United Kingdom.

season highlights



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: >>> Entire families' lives are blessed when a wheelchair is received. >>> Peter Petrovich, co-chair of the 4th Annual Drive Fore Mobility Golf Tournament, along with Ken Behring, out thanking golfers for their support. >>> Changing children's lives one wheelchair at a time. >>> Maria Jensen of Santa Clara, California Sister Cities and Jeff Behring deliver wheelchairs in Coimbra, Portugal >>> The elderly can once again be an active part of the community.





CLOCKWISE, FROM RIGHT: >>> Curious child at a distribution in Tijuana, Mexico. >>> Rotarians from around the world pushed 100 wheelchairs in the Rotary International Centennial parade in Chicago. >>> Children's welcome in Botswana. >>> New lease on life in Cuba. >>> Inaugural Willie McCovey Golf Invitational with proceeds providing wheelchairs worldwide. >>> Becca Russell of Noah's Bagels gets a hug of thanks from a young wheelchair recipient. >>> Cal Poly San Luis Obispo students raised over \$42,000 and made the trip to Guatemala to see the fruits of their labor. >>> Wheelchair Foundation President David Behring changing lives in South Africa.





we certainly received... more than we gave

THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: TARA VINEYARD AND RECIPIENT ARE ALL SMILES IN SOUTH AFRICA >>> COMPASSION DISPLAYED IN SOUTH AFRICA BY ROTARIAN PEARL LEEKA >>> GOOD TIMES IN SWAZILAND OPPOSITE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: WHEELCHAIR FOUNDATION PRESIDENT DAVID BEHRING AND CHARLI BUTTERFIELD HAVE A NEW LIFE-LONG FRIEND IN SWAZILAND >>> ROTARIAN MARK LEEKA UNLOADING WHEELCHAIRS IN SOUTH AFRICA >>> LEAVING THE WHEELCHAIR DISTRIBUTION TO GO HOME AND SHOW FAMILY AND FRIENDS HER NEW GIFT

Africa: July 15-29

A 14-day, four-country Africa distribution was a definite summer highlight for participating Rotarians and friends of the Wheelchair Foundation, who put smiles on faces and hope in the hearts of thousands of deserving people.

Thanks to one of the largest ever matching grants to South Africa from the Rotary Foundation, which included participation of numerous Rotary Clubs and Districts in North America and Southern Africa, and the generosity of several private individuals, 5,500 new wheelchairs were given to Africans in need in late July in Morocco, Botswana, South Africa and Swaziland.

The trip began when the group of volunteers traveled from the United States to Morocco for a distribution in Casablanca at the Amicale Marocaine des Handicapes where they were greeted by Rotarians and eager recipients and were treated to a traditional meal of Moroccan delicacies. Amicale Marocaine des Handicapes provides healthcare, vocational and educational training and assistance to Moroccans with disabilities.

The group then traveled south to Botswana for a wheelchair distribution near Maun where they were welcomed late in the evening by native dancers and Cliff and Elsje Peake, Rotarians from the community of Brits, who would serve as their guides for the remainder of their journey through Southern Africa. Early in the morning following their arrival they loaded into large Toyota Land Cruisers with wheelchairs tied to the roofs and boxes of quilts and school supplies stacked aboard and headed to the

Chapel at the Thuso Rehabilitation Center, a Catholic mission for lepers, for another distribution. This ceremony was highlighted by more smiling recipients from age five to 102 years old and the beautiful voices of the residents of the Center in song accompanied by incredible harmony from their gigantic handmade wooden marimbas. Everyone got involved in unloading and assisting the recipients as they arrived in vans, cars and trucks at the distribution and many new friendships were formed.

Next it was on to South Africa where Cliff and Elsje had arranged for several distributions to take place. The first distribution was in Oukasië, in Brits at the Makhudu Levy Mamabolo Community Center with the Rotary Club of Brits. Volunteers and donors Ron and Sandy Merritt, who helped fund the trip, were a hit with the local kids because of the beach balls they had brought along as gifts.





Meanwhile, Roy and Betty Ruff, handed out school supplies and handmade quilts they had brought along for the wheelchair recipients and their families. “Taking part in an experience like this makes you realize how lucky we in America are,” said Betty Ruff.

The next day the group distributed wheelchairs in Rustenburg with the Rustenburg Rotary Club at the Kopanang Ka Tsholofeld Community Project of People with Disabilities. As the local children watched, wheelchair recipients arrived in cars and by crawling on their hands and feet. Later many, like volunteers and donors Jim and Bridgette Harkey, would comment on the appreciation voiced by the recipients for the gift of a wheelchair from people who did not know them and yet had traveled so far to help them. Rotarians and volunteers Marc and Pearl Leeka, who have participated in wheelchair distributions throughout the world, both mentioned that “We never get over the smiles of joy and the happiness that giving wheelchairs brings to everyone involved.” This sentiment was repeated later in the day at a stop at the Topologo Hospice and Home Care, where doctors and nurses comfort victims of the ever prevalent HIV/AIDS epidemic that is plaguing much of Africa.

“Despite all our effort and because of the limited availability of anti-retroviral treatment we lose nearly 75 percent of the patients we see. This included several children under the age of ten who contracted the disease from their infected parents at birth,” said the director of the Hospice. “And the HIV/AIDS problem will continue to devastate Southern Africa.” Wheelchairs and other medical supplies are graciously accepted and immediately put to use.

The following day they traveled to the town of Khanyamazane for a distribution with the Rotary clubs of Nelspruit Jock and Whiteriver at the local community center gymnasium. Here they witnessed recipients brought in from rural areas by the truck load. They were entertained by an exhibit of local dance and song. “The man I helped into a wheelchair told me that this was the first wheelchair he had ever been in. He had become disabled as a young teenager and had learned to deal with his inability to use both legs and partial paralysis of one arm. When I asked his daughter, who was there with him, how old he was she told me ‘He is 69 years old’,” said one of the volunteers. “That means that for over 50 years of his life he has been crawling on the ground. It’s hard to believe.”



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 ordinance (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 an 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, until these combinable funds have been exhausted. \$21,000 will deliver an entire 280-wheelchair container to a developing country.

The group then traveled by van from South Africa to Manzini, Swaziland and used this as a jumping off point for two distributions which had been arranged by the Rotary Club of Matsapa. The first distribution took them three hours across extremely dusty roads to a mountain village where upon arriving they were greeted by waiting recipients on blankets on the ground surrounded by their families and caretakers. "The people of Swaziland are known for their patience," noted one of the Rotarians. Roy Ruff later commented "You can't believe that people live that poorly, yet they are so appreciative. One lady told me, 'We prayed for three months for you to come.' This lady was really physically challenged, and so excited to get her wheelchair. She started hugging us and singing to us—it really struck me."



The second distribution took the group to a lowland area of Swaziland in the grip of its third year of drought. One member of the group commented "Today we are seeing the difference between the poor of Swaziland and the destitute."

FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: WHEELCHAIR FOUNDATION SUPPORTERS AT A DISTRIBUTION IN SWAZILAND >>> RON MERRITT PLAYING CATCH WITH CHILDREN IN SWAZILAND

The conditions here are so bad that even though you don't want to admit it, you know that many of the people you see here are not going to make it." The response of the recipients and community was very uplifting as there was much celebration in the act of giving and receiving the much-needed wheelchairs.

The four country distribution, which was led by Ken Behring, founder of the Wheelchair Foundation, proved once again how a wheelchair can restore dignity, give many of the physically disabled recipients their first-ever taste of self-reliance, and elevate them physically, emotionally and spiritually.



On the flight back to the United States Betty Ruff commented, "After we met Ken and his family, we got involved. We got addicted. Once you go on one of these trips, you get hooked. When you see Ken involved with giving out wheelchairs, you've never seen a happier man in the world."

Betty Ruff, who is a resident of Idaho, learned about the Wheelchair Foundation from her brother, David Walters, a friend of Ken Behring. Africa was the Ruff's second trip with the Foundation, the first having been a distribution in China this past April.

"We certainly received more out of this trip than we gave," said Ruff. "Roy and I would go again in a heartbeat."

Knights of Columbus in service to all



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: CALIFORNIA STATE SECRETARY EMILIO MOURE HELPING TO CHANGE LIVES IN TIJUANA >>> TWO THUMBS UP FOR THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS >>> CHILDREN'S LIVES ARE INSTANTLY CHANGED >>> PATIENTLY WAITING FOR HIS LIFE-CHANGING WHEELCHAIR

Established in 1882 by Father Michael J. McGivney, the Knights of Columbus is a Catholic men's fraternal benefit society that was formed to render financial aid to members and their families.

In 2004 Knights donated more than \$135 million to the support of charitable causes. Since 2003, Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson has led the Knights involvement in the sponsorship of thousands of wheelchairs to Afghanistan, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, Oman, Mexico and the Philippines. Knights have been very involved in the hands on distribution of wheelchairs, and are living the theme of "United in Charity" through their gift of mobility.



In 2005 Knights from California joined forces with Knights from Northern Mexico to deliver 560 wheelchairs in the cities of Tijuana, Mexicali, Ensenada and Rosarito. California State

Wheelchair Coordinator Don Gentleman kicked off the project in the state after he participated in a mission to Guatemala in 2002, and 2005-06 State Deputy Gary Nelson has initiated a wheelchair program designed to send hundreds more wheelchairs to the Mexico City area and combine it with a pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe for all of the California and Mexico participants working together to help the less fortunate.

"Our lives have been forever changed by this experience," said Gary Nelson after participating in the wheelchair distributions in Mexico, "and we are going to do much more."

The Wheelchair Foundation thanks Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson and all of the Knights in California that are leading by wonderful example of how people who dedicate their lives to helping others can have a substantial impact on the lives of so many.





thank you for the smiles Wal-Mart

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: EDDIE GIVES A THUMBS UP FOR HIS NEW WHEELCHAIR IN CHICAGO >>> CHILDREN CAN NOW ATTEND SCHOOL >>> WAL-MART EMPLOYEES WITH THANKFUL WHEELCHAIR RECIPIENTS IN WASHINGTON D.C. >>> PROVIDING WHEELCHAIRS IN THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA >>> FIRST LADY OF NEW YORK, LIBBY PITAKI, AT THE WHEELCHAIR DISTRIBUTION IN NEW YORK CITY

Wal-Mart is the world's largest retail chain with over 5,700 stores worldwide, and has become one of America's greatest success stories thanks to the entrepreneurial genius of its founder Sam Walton.

There are many reasons that Wal-Mart has become so successful, but one of the most obvious ones is that its 1.7 million "associates" take ownership and pride in their positions, and follow the company example of community participation.

In 2005, Wal-Mart Stores sponsored the delivery of 1,000 brand new wheelchairs into ten communities across the U.S. Representatives of management and associates from Wal-Mart Stores and Sam's Clubs actively participated in the "Wheels Across America" program, and helped distribute the wheelchairs to people in their local communities who were in need of a wheelchair but could not afford one.

Goodwill Industries acted as the Wheelchair Foundation's NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) and received the wheelchairs in New York, Washington, D.C., Orlando, Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Houston, Phoenix, Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay area. Goodwill and Wal-Mart worked together with local organizations such as the Muscular Dystrophy Association, Children's Hospitals,

Ronald McDonald House Charities, Centers for Independent Living and numerous others that assist those with physical disabilities. Goodwill also supplied wheelchairs to people involved in their own work and training programs that assist the physically disabled.

After distributing 1,000 wheelchairs in ten cities, Wheelchair Foundation Director of Public Education Chris Lewis observed, "A man named Eddie came up to me after receiving his wheelchair in Chicago and told me that Wal-Mart is his absolute favorite place to shop. I asked him why, and was told, 'When you are in a wheelchair and trying to live an independent life, there are lots of things that people don't realize. Many people don't smile at a person in a wheelchair, they look away. When I go into Wal-Mart, the first thing I get is a friendly greeting and a smile, and there is always somebody to help me get something down from a high shelf. This really means a lot to me, and I like the low prices too.' I heard versions of this same story in at least six of the cities where I attended the wheelchair distributions."

Beginning in November 2005, the Wheelchair Foundation and Wal-Mart China have embarked on a collaborative relationship that will sponsor wheelchairs into the communities where Wal-Mart has stores in China.

The Wheelchair Foundation is grateful to Wal-Mart Stores worldwide and all of its associates and managers who are helping us provide mobility to people with physical disabilities.



words can't even explain it

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: RECIPIENT FROM TWO YEARS AGO STILL USING HER WHEELCHAIR ON A DAILY BASIS TO PLAY WITH HER GRANDCHILDREN >>> EXCITED FOR HER NEW LIFE AFTER RECEIVING A NEW WHEELCHAIR >>> EVEN IN THE WIND AND RAIN HUNDREDS TURN OUT FOR THEIR NEW WHEELCHAIR >>> BRAD HOWARD, OF HOWARD TOURS, PROVIDING MOBILITY IN VIETNAM



People from all over the U.S. met at San Francisco International Airport in late March, where they joined representatives of the Wheelchair Foundation to spend more than two weeks distributing wheelchairs in Vietnam. It was, by all accounts, a “wonderful and rewarding” experience.

Armon Helvig, who is no stranger to world travel, decided to make this particular trip after seeing Ken Behring on television and thinking to himself, “That’s something I can do!” And as it turned out, Helvig would enjoy one of the “best and most exciting” adventures of his life.

What made this trip so special for Helvig? He was personally involved in helping pass out 180 wheelchairs to eager and grateful recipients. In all, 740 wheelchairs were distributed.



“Hopping from city to city and seeing many of Vietnam’s most beautiful places was certainly very nice,” said Helvig, “but it was interacting with people and seeing the big difference a wheelchair can make in someone’s life that I found most rewarding – and, at times, very emotional.”

Helvig said that he was able to help assemble the wheelchairs and then personally hand them out to people of all ages who turned out for the distributions. Some of the recipients arrived on the back of motorbikes; others were brought on the backs of relatives. Parents carried children, and children carried parents.

“I enjoyed having an interpreter for part of the distribution so I could talk to the people and learn about their experiences,” said Helvig. “Some were disabled from landmines or Agent Orange. One woman was disabled from a car accident, and there was a little boy who was both mentally and physically disabled.”

The most memorable part of the trip for Helvig came when he had the opportunity to visit the home of a family who could not make it to the distribution site. He witnessed their living conditions and situation firsthand. The man had been in bed for more than six months due to a heart attack or stroke. When he was seated in his wheelchair and brought to the front door, the man spoke. Then, his wife broke down in tears. Helvig and others asked the interpreter why she was crying. The wife said that this was the first time her husband had spoken in four months. This is just one of many heart-warming sto-

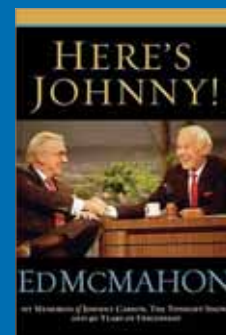
ries that have become indelible memories for people making this trip:

- >> “There was a little girl who couldn’t have been more than 12 at most. And she said ‘thank you’ in English. She tried to say ‘I am’ and say her name, which I couldn’t pronounce. She had a few phrases in English that she wanted to try out like ‘good-bye’ when we left. I thought that was really special. She was clearly grateful for it [the wheelchair] and you could see that.”
- >> “I think what really got to me were the tiny little wheelchairs. I had never seen [wheelchairs] that small before. I walked in and I just started crying...I was overcome by grief that those little children had to learn how to manipulate the little machines. And then as I sat there, there was a little boy next to me and he was having such a good time rolling back and forth. And I thought, he is such a joy.”
- >> “When you give a recipient a wheelchair, you liberate the family as well because no one has to carry around the person as much. Many recipients say that the wheelchair is a great gift, but the best gift is that people are no longer a burden to their siblings and folks.”

Helvig returned from Vietnam enthusiastically showing off a DVD that highlighted his experiences. He now passes out copies to friends and clients, to share the hope and the joy and the opportunity for a better life that is found in something as simple as a wheelchair. “Words,” he said, “can’t even begin to explain the experience.”

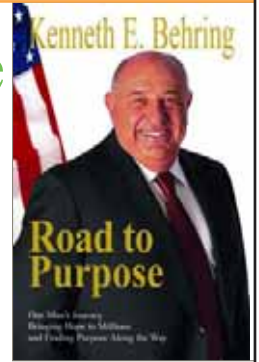
Ed McMahon, member of the Wheelchair Foundation International Board of Advisors, is the only person authorized to write a book on the “late-great” Johnny Carson. It is a classic.

For a donation of \$100 to the Wheelchair Foundation, you will receive a book and an autographed photo of Ed. One wheelchair will be sponsored and we will mail you a beautiful folder with a photo of a wheelchair recipient. Help change a life and enjoy reading about the amazing Johnny Carson!





YOU can change a life
 in the name of a loved one
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 free copy of **Ken Behring's**
 book



Road to Purpose

—his personal journey that led to
 the creation of the Wheelchair Foundation,
 and the stories of people
 we have touched.

EACH \$75 DONATION WILL DELIVER A WHEELCHAIR AND GREATLY IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR A CHILD, TEEN OR ADULT WITHOUT MOBILITY. YOU WILL RECEIVE A BEAUTIFUL CERTIFICATE OF THANKS WITH A PICTURE OF A WHEELCHAIR RECIPIENT IN YOUR NAME OR DEDICATED TO YOUR LOVED ONE. YOU WILL ALSO RECEIVE A FREE COPY OF ROAD TO PURPOSE. DONATE TWO WHEELCHAIRS AND RECEIVE A SIGNED COPY.



Sample Presentation Folder

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