Changing THE WORLD
Mission and Goals

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

Our Goal
The Wheelchair Foundation aims to deliver wheelchairs to people who cannot afford to buy one, and to further the awareness that a wheelchair is no longer an unaffordable relief option for delivery to developing countries around the world.

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

ABOUT US

A MESSAGE FROM KEN BEHRING

A happy summer to everyone who gets this message. 2016 has proven an exciting and busy year! We could not have asked for a better reception from the public for The Spirit of the Old West exhibit at Blackhawk Museums. Every time I visit the exhibit it is full of children and adults in awe of the incredible story of the building of the America West and our fascinating artifacts.

In June, I celebrated my birthday in my favorite way, with the winners of the 2016 National History Day finals in Maryland, and we had a party at the Smithsonian for all the finalists from around the country and abroad. My wife, Pat, and I have always been passionate about education and educators, and this is our chance to honor both at the same time.

Wheelchair Foundation continues to distribute thousands of wheelchairs worldwide every month. Our wheelchairs go to tiny islands out in the ocean, and to the biggest cities on the planet. They always seem to find their way to where they are needed most.

I want to finish this message with a note of thanks to our donors, volunteers and partners. Wheelchair Foundation’s mission continues to touch the lives of people all over the world. Your actions speak volumes about your passion for this cause.

Kenneth E. Behring
Founder and Chairman
Wheelchair Foundation Florida and the Hofmann Family Foundation partnered with the Rotary Clubs of Grand Bahama (Freeport, Sunrise and Sunset), to provide 110 brand new wheelchairs to the disabled and less fortunate throughout Grand Bahama, Grand Cay and Abaco Islands.

District 6690 Rotarian Stephen Gunn, who chairs the club’s Wheelchairs for the Handicapped Programme, revealed that, “Since 2002, over 700 wheelchairs have been distributed around the community in partnership with the Bahama Council for the Disabled, with Rotary members delivering wheelchairs directly to recipients’ homes as part of their service.”
BUILDING ON A DECADE LONG PARTNERSHIP WITH MONTERREY, MEXICO, ROTARIANS

BY JOSH BURROUGHGS

I had the honor of serving on this mission trip delivering 560 wheelchairs and participating in hands on service projects with our local Rotarian partners. This life changing experience (now my 8th wheelchair distribution to date) continues to affect me as a constant reminder of the many blessings we have here in the states, and our obligation to reach outside comfort zones to share our gifts of time, talent and treasure with others.

What was equally inspiring was the sheer generosity of our donors towards this project. In less than 8 months, starting with a modest challenge grant from the Silicon Valley Chapter and Rotary 5170 District Governor Susan Valenta, the campaign caught on like wildfire throughout the Bay Area Rotary clubs – a huge outpouring of support from individuals, businesses, and foundations.

Gandhi said it best, and I can’t think of a better way to describe the feelings felt on our immersive wheelchair distribution in Monterrey, Mexico, a joint venture between the Rotary District 5170 (Bay Area) and the Silicon Valley Chapter of the Wheelchair Foundation.

The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.

-Mahatma Gandhi
This tangible gift of mobility and its life changing impacts were sourced locally, and distributed globally, but the effects on the lives of the recipients can only be briefly documented through my experience delivering the chairs. The true impact will be lifelong, and one in which entire family-units are transformed.

Check back soon for a follow-up article on our 2nd mission trip, to Panama in October 2016, where we will be delivering 560 wheelchairs in another great Central American outpost.
It was a glorious day as 30 of us loaded wheelchairs aboard the vessel MV Free Willie, and cast off from the city of Castries, for the picturesque town of Soufriere, the former capital of Saint Lucia and the birthplace of Empress Josephine, the wife of Napoleon Bonaparte. Our group consisted of visiting Rotarians from the Rotary club of Pleasanton, California, and members of Wine for Wheels, as well as Rotarians from the Rotary club of Gros Islet.

We docked, unpacked and assembled wheelchairs. Soon we were joined by the Parliamentary Representative for the area who would act as our guide as we delivered wheelchairs to home bound citizens. We met so many beautiful and welcoming families and loved ones. Following a day of home visits, we delivered the remainder of the wheelchairs we had brought along with us to the staff of the Soufriere Hospital, who would continue the community distribution.
The following day we held a distribution at Saint James’s Club at Morgan Bay. Jeff Behring, the Founder of Wine for Wheels, explained that he is building on his father’s legacy. His dad started Wheelchair Foundation after a visit to the Far East. He was privileged to donate a wheelchair to someone who, upon regaining their independence as a result of receiving this simple gift, expressed that their despair had been replaced by a will to live.

One of the highlights of the week was donating wheelchairs to the Child Development and Guidance Centre. It was touching to see the positive impact the wheelchairs made in the children’s lives, and to observe the passion that Dr. Kim Gardner and her team has for each child.

For the remainder of the week teams of Rotarians and the Ministry of Health delivered more than 150 wheelchairs to individuals in need of mobility.
Wheelchair Foundation’s *Mobility for America* program has provided more than 10,000 wheelchairs to Americans in need of mobility, but without access to a wheelchair, right here in the good old U.S.A!

Your $150 donation can provide a much needed wheelchair to someone nearby. We help Veterans and the elderly, schools and hospitals, the homeless and the forgotten who have fallen through the cracks, and maybe even someone you might know?