

WHEELS FOR THE WORLD

In many less resourced countries, having a disability translates into a life of isolation and poverty, especially without mobility in the form of a wheelchair. Joni and Friends *Wheels for the World* program offers practical help by providing professionally-fitted wheelchairs while also sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with people struggling with disability.

With the cost of a wheelchair often exceeding a full year's wages, a wheelchair is not within reach for most people. Joni and Friends *Wheels for the World* program provides free wheelchairs through their network of providers and ensures that each one is properly fitted professionally and individualized to every wheelchair recipient. This loving service often opens the door to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with people around the world. Receiving a wheelchair is a life changer for someone with a disability. It opens up whole new possibilities; children and adults are more readily accepted and able to attend school and become more active participants in their community.

The World Health Organization states that there are over a billion people, about 15% of the world's population, affected by disability, with approximately 70,000,000 in need of a wheelchair. Faced with such need for those suffering with disability, Joni and Friends has intentionally sought to provide wheelchairs to less resourced countries. Since 1994, Joni and Friends has provided over 130,000 wheelchairs and Bibles to people around the world, with a God-sized vision is to provide another 70,000 wheelchairs by the year 2020!

Joni and Friends volunteers collect used, restorable wheelchairs from across the United States. Collected wheelchairs are then shipped to prison based wheelchair Restoration Centers where inmates are trained and equipped to restore wheelchairs to like-new condition. Participating inmates are presented the Gospel message and readily connect with the liberation a restored wheelchair provides a wheelchair recipient in another country. Oftentimes inmates working to restore wheelchairs realize their own personal restoration while serving in prison.

Wheels for the World is not about dropping off wheelchairs. It is about loving and serving people in order to facilitate lasting physical, emotional and spiritual support in the context of a Christ centered Church. With the personal care of ensuring wheelchairs are in good condition and fitting each wheelchair to an individual's size, shape and disability, wheelchair recipients and their caregivers are open to hearing the Gospel and accepting invitation to join a Church community.

In honoring God through caring for humanity, *Wheels for the World* is witnessing cultural transformation, with children and adults being rescued through the gift of a wheelchair and the Gospel message.

Joni and Friends adopts each country they serve on a permanent basis, which is fundamental to the lasting presence and impact of the outreach to that country. Committed to the long term physical and spiritual lives of the wheelchair recipients and their families, Joni and Friends cultivates strategic in-country partnerships with local churches, mission organizations and other international partners to encourage and enrich individuals and communities affected by disability.