

# ROC the World Times

Empowering People Through the Gift of Mobility



*Providing mobility products without regard to political affiliation, religious belief or ethnic identity.*

## IRAQ GIFT OF MOBILITY

*Written by: Brad Blauser and Andrew Babcock*

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq, Dec. 17, 2007 –

Local Iraqi doctors and the 1-33rd Cavalry Regiment soldiers identified over 400 disabled children in Baghdad alone who need pediatric wheelchairs to better their odds of long-term survival. Medics from 1st Squadron, 33rd Cavalry, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division assembled and custom fit ROC Chairs to many of these children on December 13th. “I can’t imagine what it must be like having to carry your child around from place to place,” said Army Dr. (Capt.) James Phillips, 1-33rd Cavalry Regiment battalion surgeon. “I’m just glad we were able to do something to help.”

Some of the children’s conditions have yet to be officially diagnosed, but they all require assistance getting around. The wheelchair donations were a blessing to the families of these handicapped children.

Phillips said it was a little heartbreaking to see children who, in some cases, were teenagers and just getting their first wheelchairs, but he was glad to see their quality of life improve.

“This is a great feeling to see you help our kids,” said Ihsaa Hadi, whose 13-year-old son received a wheelchair. Hadi had a hard time expressing his gratitude and said he hadn’t realized the U.S. Army could help him like this.

Noor Mustafa, 7, has limited use of her legs. She was orphaned when her parents passed away and is now in the care of her aunt. “It’s a wonderful feeling to have the wheelchair,” said Madoor, Noor’s aunt. “I always have to carry her from place to place; now I have this wheelchair.”



Testimonial from: Conchita Harris’s (pictured left) “I had no idea what to expect when I volunteered to participate in the wheelchair distribution. I had experienced CME’s (combined medical engagement) before, but was never able to see a tangible difference, as there was usually just an exchange of medicines. However, during the wheelchair handout, I was able to see children’s lives transformed. It was evident that many of the kids had been carried their entire lives. The parents awkwardly held their quickly growing children and the younger children were extremely apprehensive to be let go of. To many it was a foreign world, not to be carried. I can only hope that they adjust to their new freedom and are able to have a better life because of it. Despite the language barrier, everyone made it evident at how grateful they were for the wheelchairs. I felt no hostility or sense of danger. I wish the children the best of care.”



## MOROCCO WHEELCHAIR DISTRIBUTION

The Morocco Wheelchair Distribution scheduled from April 26—May 5th will be based in Casablanca where 200 individuals will be custom fit to their new wheelchairs. The Morocco Foundation has been our strategic partner in Casablanca. This mission includes a large percentage of young children in need of specialized seating. The custom fitting team will be very busy making precise adjustments to each wheelchair in order to best serve the recipient. This will be ROC’s first trip to Morocco. We are excited to strengthen new partnerships to help 200 Moroccans and discuss ways to work together to provide follow up, as well as create

records of people needing wheelchairs in the future. ROC is progressing well towards establishing manufacturing and assembly operations in developing countries. Not much is known yet about Morocco’s potential to produce wheelchairs. The Morocco Foundation will help to open up dialogue to investigate potential for manufacturing. The need for specialized wheelchairs in Morocco is staggering and we look forward to this mission and all future opportunities to empower Moroccans to provide for their own needs.



The King Hassan II Mosque

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Brad Blauser and a child that received a ROC Chair in Baghdad.

## MISSION STATEMENT:

To provide mobility devices for disabled people in developing countries and to further programs and education that will help reduce barriers to, and enhance mobility for these individuals.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDERS

It's all about relationships. First, there's our relationship with God who loves each one of us unconditionally. God places visions on our hearts and then brings wonderful people into our lives to help make those dreams come true. Secondly, it's our relationships with one another. We are in awe of how God orchestrates appointments, bringing us together with a network of dynamic people who are compassionately eager to use their talents and resources to care for others across the globe. From the children who are using their art, music and writing talents to sponsor wheelchairs and touch lives, to our dedicated therapists and volunteers who donate their vacation time and savings to go on distribution trips. There are brave citizens and soldiers who make it possible for ROC to help families in Iraq. Our partner organizations strengthen us and provide encouragement and support. We at ROC Wheels want all our donors and volunteers to



know that you are integral members of our team. Your prayers and sacrificial giving are vital and appreciated. Finally, we would like to thank all those thousands of individuals that we have been honored to fit in wheelchairs and other mobility devices. You and your families are truly an inspiration, for you have deeply touched and changed our lives for the better!

*Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Eph. 3:20*

**SPECIAL THANKS: Holmes & Turner (pro-bono audit), Max Media (pro-bono television commercials), Insty Prints, Feed the Children, Craig Lenz, Rosalie Barndt, Jes Hanson, CNN Wayne Drash, Carol Jordan, Arwa Damon**

## A MESSAGE FROM ANDREW BABCOCK

The movement has begun and ROC Wheels is one of the leaders. The World Health Organizations adopted standards and guidelines for serving mobility needs around the world including the following components. Training and education for local specialists, appropriate mobility devices, and local assembly or manufacturing operations to empower people to provide for their own needs. These guidelines are exactly what ROC has been emphasizing for years. ROC Wheels will continue to coordinate 4-6

wheelchair distributions a year to help those in need while developing partnerships that hopefully lead local wheelchair manufacturing.

We must avoid creating dependent relationships with humanitarian aid. It is crucial to "teach a man to fish." Establishing in-country manufacturing takes a great deal of time and money and we need your help to lead this movement. Please redirect some of your support to ROC Chair Manufacturing.

## SAN CARLOS, MEXICO

The air was filled with shouts of joy and laughter as the brightly colored parachute danced up and down in response to the multitude of children grasping its perimeter. Other children were creating salvation bracelets with colors that represent the good news of the God's love. Puppets acted out fun skits and songs in Spanish while village people waited to see the doctors and nurses. Vitamins and medications were distributed by the mobile pharmacy and eye glasses were dispersed to hundreds. All who wanted prayer were prayed for and given a New Testament Bible. This was ROC Wheels third consecutive year of partnering with Rocky Mountain Ministries in the surrounding area of Guaymas, Mexico. Missionaries Brenda and Art Koenes (ROC board member), hosted the 30 person team at their mission base in San Carlos. ROC especially appreciated the help of the "farmers" on the team for their creative problem solving, extensive skills with tools and genuine love for the people we fit with wheelchairs. We also had a great team of youth who helped with fitting chairs, translating, photography, registration and playing with the children while they waited. Four of the disabled children who received ROC Chairs were sponsored by the Emily Dickinson fifth graders from Bozeman, MT. These



Lee Ann Hanson and volunteer, Michelle (physical therapist)

school kids worked hard at creating beautiful hand made ceramic beaded necklaces and sold them at their Christmas program in order to raise the funds. Special thanks goes out to the Gillhousen Foundation for helping us to empower kids to reach out and care. I'd like to end with a precious memory of Susana, a 42 year old woman with severe cerebral palsy from birth. God blessed us with the privilege of fitting Susana with her first wheelchair. We will never forget the cry of joy and thankfulness that was expressed by Susana and her family as we wheeled her outside her home for the first time. Off she went with her sister to visit family and the neighborhood church. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." 2 Cor. 3:17 May the Lord bless each of you for caring.

## CNN IRAQ STORY AND ARTICLE

ROC Wheels thanks Wayne Drash, CNN Television and Website Producer for helping highlight Wheelchair For Iraqi Kids and ROC Wheels Baghdad wheelchair distribution that took place on December 13th. On February 15th CNN World began running the story that played around the world for the next two weeks. Support began to flood in as an article on CNN's website included a link to make a donation towards the Iraq Wheelchair Mission. The first day 159 internet donations posted along with many more checks. The total amount raised is \$161,800. This money will provide nearly 550 wheelchairs for distribution in Baghdad through our partner Brad Blauser. The majority of these wheelchairs will be

ROC Chairs except for special requests for other mobility products. The coverage also resulted in several foundations contacting ROC and requesting proposals.



## EMPOWERING OTHER TO MANUFACTURE ROC CHAIRS

Soon 500 ROC Chairs will be assembled in Iraq thanks to a partnerships established by the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Iraq. This comprehensive program will be a powerful first step to serve the overwhelming need for pediatric wheelchairs in Iraq.

It has taken tremendous coordination between all parties to develop a strategy that will create an assembly operation that will convert to manufacturing of ROC Chairs and other mobility products. ROC Wheels is using a similar template as was used in Vietnam, specifically tailored to the region. Details of this mission are being held confidential for the safety of our partners. ROC is hopeful that successful completion of this mission will result in USAID

requesting ROC to duplicate this process elsewhere. This mission provides more than just mobility. Please help support our efforts to create sustainable programs for long-term solutions.

Two years ago Ken Erickson, President of Kifas Manufacturing in Ankara, Turkey contacted ROC requesting assistance to manufacture ROC Chairs in his wheelchair factory. Currently the Executive Officers Club of Portland, Oregon is actively exploring ways to help finance the project. Hopefully we can coordinate the Iraq and Turkey missions together to reduce unnecessary duplication, allow for future collaboration on new products, and reduce costs by sharing local sources of materials.

## UPCOMING WHEELCHAIR DISTRIBUTIONS



JAMAICA



GUATEMALA



TANZANIA



VIETNAM



MALI

ROC Wheels is returning to Jamaica again to visit past wheelchair recipients, as well as help another 200 people in need of mobility. The mission will be open to volunteers to join us in Montego Bay and Kingston Jamaica. The distribution dates have not yet been set as we are still coordinating the mission with partners. Following Jamaica ROC is hoping to perform a distribution in Guatemala to help 200 people in need of mobility and visit a potential wheelchair manufacturing site that our partners at Hope Haven are expanding to manufacture the

Kids Chair. Expect this mission to happen late summer. The second half of 2008 we have a several countries that are interested in hosting distributions. The First Lady of Mali asked ROC to return towards the end 2008 to provide more wheelchairs and discuss manufacturing potential. The ROC Chair factory in Vietnam is currently manufacturing nearly 100 ROC Chairs per month. Working together on a distribution would be an exciting opportunity. Look for a mission to Tanzania early next year as we are detailing the mission with our partners in-country.

## GIVE THE GIFT OF MOBILITY TODAY AND CHANGE A LIFE

Ralph Hotchkiss, Founder of Whirlwind Wheelchairs International, joined ROC in Nairobi, Kenya to help custom fit wheelchairs to children at the Dagoretti Center for Disabled Children.

Ralph (on the right) sharing a special moment.



Please submit your donation in the envelope inside this newsletter and help those in need!

### Giving Needs

- ◆ General Support Greatly Needed!
- ◆ \$300 Adopt-A-Chair Sponsorship
- ◆ Support for Upcoming Missions
- ◆ Empowering ROC Chair Manufacturing
- ◆ Development of new ROC Wheelchairs
- ◆ Support a Physical Therapist

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