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Above: the Lopez family, clockwise from left: Amilar, Evelin, Joni Onan and Cindi
Below: Lorenzo and his mother



HONDURAS DISTRIBUTION REPORT

Partnering with Through the Roof Ministries www.throughtheroofministries.org

—by Paul and Pat Welch of TTRM with editing by Lynda Rimke

The long awaited distribution of wheelchairs for the purpose of radically improving lives and sharing the gospel has come to a close. We saw God's love for His people affected by disabilities, and for those of us trying to serve them. Following are three of the many inspiring stories experienced that week:

The Lopez family came to get help for four children affected by disabilities. It took many hours to fit proper wheelchairs for the two brothers and one sister, and a walker for Evelin. They all have undiagnosed progressive neurological conditions that began later in childhood: they are fully cognitive, but have lost mobility and speech. These gifts from God brought smiles to their faces.

Our pastor was sharing the gospel with another individual within hearing range of one of the young men in this family. The latter indicated to the pastor as he passed by that he wanted a relationship with Christ by repeatedly curling his hands up towards his chest. The pastor went to the man's brother for help with communication and, with tears rolling down his cheeks, the young man prayed to invite Christ into his life as his Lord and Savior!

Along with their uncle the children were accompanied by their mother and older sister. Their father works out of the country to support the family. The love within the family is obvious to anyone observing the group for even a few minutes

Then there is the story of a man who brought his tightly constricted 7 yr. old son, **Lorenzo**, to us in his arms. The boy's legs were scissored and in full extension. His head was thrust backwards, flexing his neck forward. At times he struggled to swallow. When approached by the therapist for an evaluation, the father insisted that he be placed in a chair that would allow him to remain in this position because that is how he was "most comfortable". The therapist explained through an interpreter that he would be able to sit up comfortably and even attend school if given the right chair. The father wouldn't budge and we were going to honor his request when in rolled Edwin.

Edwin came to us four years ago in much the same state. He received a chair and a whole new perspective on the world. He had surgery two years ago on the tendons in his legs and was sitting upright, alert and smiling brightly. He is in first or second grade this year. When approached by the therapist, Edwin's guardian and the interpreter, the father was willing to let us try. By the end of the day (it can take that long to get the chair to fit just right!), The father was encouraging other parents and Lorenzo was sitting in a fairly relaxed position in his new chair with a smile on his face. The father had even been given information that would allow him to pursue the surgery for Lorenzo at a minimal expense.

We were all amazed by a woman who had carried her 4-year-old daughter with spina bifida for nine hours as they walked down from the mountain... on the chance we might find the right chair for her. Amazingly, God had sent just one wheelchair especially made for young children with this disability. It was a perfect fit for **Teodora!** We were able to collect enough money for bus fare to get them to within three hours walking distance from home...

The pastors that volunteered their time for this purpose were very moved by the stories of the families and friends with whom they shared. One pastor stated that he had come to give but found that he had received a great blessing instead.

The team was unique in that every member had been to Honduras at least

God continues to
move hearts through
the channel
of mercy and
mobility that is
Wheels of Hope



The Honduras distribution team

once before. They jelled quickly. We had an electrician and another from Jesús de Otoro work all Saturday to install new lighting. The rest set up for the distribution. Seventy-three fittings, many God-sightings and five days later, we closed up shop. We are still basking in the afterglow!

Patrick's report: On my first day I did some of the adjusting of seating and footrests. I had shown Debbie the head PT that the footrests could be modified quite a lot. By the second day I was the main footrest alteration guy. I did a lot of cutting and reworking of the footrests that were too long and needed to be made shorter.

I didn't do as much training as I thought I would. Teo is a wheelchair user who works for Through the Roof Ministries part time. I think Teo was able to do most of the maintenance already, he works on bicycles at his home. He had asked about the socket and ratchet set I had brought to do repairs and leave for the repair shop. The shop already had enough tools, so I gave him the set. He was extremely thankful.

We were doing distributions Monday through Thursday. Monday was perfect, a certain number of people were scheduled to come. Tuesday was just a little slow, finished up around 4 PM. Wednesday we didn't know who was coming. They did a radio announcement on Tuesday about the wheelchair distribution. By 10 o'clock we had a lot of people coming for wheelchairs. We finished up the last person around 6 that evening. Thursday we had people waiting when we got there at 7:30 am. We finished the last person by 7:30.

Prayer points: *Pray that the level of passion experienced by the pastors in sharing the gospel with the disabled this week would spread throughout their churches, and that the seeds sown and decisions made would transform lives*

Pray for Pablo, who needs dialysis three times a week. He was able to afford his treatments until a recent government failure to pay the physician. Without the funds, he faces death very soon. He and his wife and son made a decision to follow Jesus this past spring. May God be their strength and Provider in time of need.

Pray for guidance in making contacts in a new area for our next distribution in late February. Pat and Paul need insight for future project development and to make good first impressions.

Consider supporting Through the Roof Ministries with your year-end giving and charitable giving in 2009. Contact Margaret Matasic about 2009 missions trips and volunteer opportunities at the Chapel. Her email is info@throughtheroofministries.org and phone is 330-315-5522.

A new channel develops for the Dominican Republic

A large part of the Wheels of Hope strategic plan is to seek out new distribution channels for the abundance of equipment just waiting in our warehouse. Through prayer and networking, one new river of ministry has sprung forth.

Kurt and Debi Hofer have been ministering in the DR for over 20 years, and have been working with the government to bring medical equipment to those in need all over the country. When Pastor Dave Fisher first saw the equipment in the warehouse, he quickly made the connection. By the time Patrick returned from Honduras, a container was ready to be loaded by Kurt and Debi, Pastor

Dave and a band of brothers from Sanctuary of Praise church of Akron. In addition to 50 wheelchairs and an abundance of walking and bath aides and hospital mattresses, the Hofers loaded brightly wrapped gifts for children, and the team added boxes of warm blankets collected by the church.

Prayer point: *Continue to pray for increased distribution channels, shipping connections and operating funds in 2009.*

Upcoming Trips and Distributions in 2008-9

Prayer point: *Please pray for Kurt and Debi Hofer and Pastor Dave, as they lead an exploratory trip throughout the Dominican to solidify distribution points in December. Pray for the development of a distribution team to work many in-country projects in June 2009.*

Prayer point: *Continue to pray for Bolivia, which is closed to U.S. humanitarian aid and ministry, due to the political situation there. Pray for wisdom for partners Judy and Alberto Nunez of FRIDLA concerning the disability ministry they have established there.*

Prayer point: *Pray for new FRIDLA opportunities in Uruguay, and Wheels of Hope containers shipped there. Pray for Patrick's trip to help establish and train technicians and repair ministry in January 2009.*

Prayer point: *Pray for the ongoing ministry through Pioneers of Hope in Thailand. Pray for protection of the ministry and missionaries throughout the many political changes and unrest within the country.*

Our Mission To raise the poor with disabilities from the dust and give them a place of physical dignity (Ps 113:7,8) spiritual regeneration in Christ (Titus 3:4,5) and capability in Christ (Phil 4:13).

May God bless and direct you as you consider supporting our mission with your year-end giving and contributions to non-profit efforts in 2009.

To contact us, email patrick@wheelsofhope.org or call 330-620-4214



Members of Sanctuary of Praise devote a Saturday morning to load a 40' container with God's storehouse of blessings for the poor and needy.

God continues to provide through your prayers, volunteer efforts and financial giving.

Thank you!