2011 has provided Wheels of Hope with new ways to stay connected, as friends and volunteers of Wheels of Hope use the internet to talk, blog, share, “join” and “like” on Facebook for the benefit of persons with disabilities all over the world. (Meanwhile our network also continues to grow through good old-fashioned word-of-mouth.)

Facebook has become an excellent way to keep up with current events in our distribution channels all over the world, and a wonderful resource for stories. When Jasmine Tell, who volunteers at the Chaing Mai hospital where Luc heads up our distribution program posted one recipient’s photo, a conversation started between four of her American friends who had met the lady before, during a distribution where no appropriate wheelchair was available. The comments under the photo reveal an amazing story:

Jasmine: “This lady had received a wheelchair from us a few years back. She had the most amazing smile! I also loved her family’s addition to the wheelchair to help keep her situated... a chunk of bamboo!”

B: “Oh my goodness, Jasmine. I remember this beautiful woman! We called her “Sweetheart”. She was at my very first distribution on my very first day in Thailand. We didn’t have a wheelchair that day that fit her correctly and the (American) therapist was in tears over not being able to seat her properly. RICD promised to go back and find her a better chair after we left. I’m so blessed to see her beautiful face with the smile that has been seared into my heart from that day to this.”

C: “Yes! Me, too! I was on her team with Barb as her therapist. She had the patience of Job ... it took from when they got there to sundown to fit her into her wheelchair ... and she never stopped smiling.”

B: “Yes! You sat with her for hours while she laid on a mat on the pavement and waited. We all came over at one point or another to sit and talk with her. You had given her a cross necklace and she pointed to mine and then to her new one and we hugged. Nuda shared the gospel with her. Oh, my, what a treat to see her fitted again with a chair more suited for her.”

Jasmine: “Aww! That’s so neat! I’m so glad I got pictures, although there was no way to pass by that gorgeous smile and NOT want to take pictures!”

T: “So cool, I totally remember her too!”

G: “I remember this person”

Lynda: “That recliner that fits her so well was donated to Wheels of Hope from Invacare. I’m so blessed to see this, and the Wheels of Hope volunteers hearts will sing when they see it too! They refurbish all the chairs we send, and in a cold warehouse in Ohio in January, too!”

“Sweetheart” has made good use of this wheelchair, but visited on this day for repairs or adjustments, or perhaps even a new reclining wheelchair. We are confident the Thai physical therapists at the RICD hospital assessed any needs, and the many staff in the program could make the adjustments and improve on the “stick of bamboo”.

Luc Masschelein, the director of Wheels of Hope in Thailand, through the RICD hospital, tells us that there are more worker bees than equipment to keep them busy, so we sent one more container this year to help out. The waiting list has grown too, as each of the five distribution points now have grown branch distribution points. There are over 1000 people like “Sweetheart”
patiently waiting for equipment. We just shipped our first container for 2012 on January 9th and pray for 2-3 more shipments by December.

Patrick adds “Luc informed me that he has a lot of young Thai volunteers. He needs work for them when they are not doing distributions. This means we can send rollators or other equipment that needs a little repair. Thailand is a great place for the many walkers and rollators we have.”

Patrick and Lynda have enjoyed Skype video conversations with Luc and Johannes, our counterparts in Chaing Mai, Thailand. Skype and Facebook have enabled us to get a much better feel for just how Wheels of Hope equipment is impacting lives.

The best channels to communicate news as it happens are the Wheels of Hope Facebook group and cause pages, and the new Wheels of Hope blog. Keeping these up-to-date is my goal, and should make annual reports so much easier to create from the stories that are posted all year long.

If you are already using Facebook, you can “join” the Wheels of Hope group to get news of any warehouse volunteer opportunities, which we do post regularly as “events.” Photos and stories are posted to the group page, and also a “cause” page that further promotes Wheels of Hope. You can also “like” Wheels of Hope at our website on our contact page: www.wheelsofhope.org/contact.html This puts our website on your wall and news feed.

If you enjoy reading blogs, you can check out our new blog on wordpress: wheelsofhope.wordpress.com The same photos and stories that get posted on Facebook eventually find their way to the blog, too, for the benefit of all.

**Girl meets Boy in Chaing Mai: a Missionary Love Story**

Wheels of Hope has been connected with the Tell family in Thailand since 1999, when Doug and Wendy and their four small children were new Pioneers missionaries in Chaing Mai. That year, Doug came back to Akron and met Patrick with need of a special wheelchair that a Thai senator had seen on the internet. Amazingly, that very wheelchair was waiting for Doug at our warehouse in Canton. Coincidence? Not when you believe in the grace and mercy of a loving God! Through that senator, the Thailand RICD program of distribution was birthed.

Through the years many changes have come to the Tell family as the children have grown up and moved on. But Joey Tell remained in Thailand with scant hope of ever meeting an American Christian life-partner who would share his passion for ministering to the disabled in Chaing Mai ... until Joni and Friends began to utilize the RICD wheelchair program for their own wheelchair outreaches and sent along Jasmine! Jasmine grew to love Thailand, and true love was soon to follow!

In November 2010 Joey and Jasmine were married in Jasmine’s Arizona home town, and flew to Thailand three
days later where they have ministered non-stop, taking a hiatus to visit family back in the States and benefit from baby showers! Jasmine, who grew up in a large family that included several adopted kids with disabilities, had no desire to delay parenting, and Joey not only got on the same page, but cheerfully painted the spare bedroom a pale pink when Ilyria was on the way.

Ilyria delayed her appearance to coincide with the King’s birthday on December 5th, to the delight of all of Joey and Jasmine’s Thai friends. She wasted no time in making regular appearances at the RICD distribution center, snugly wrapped in Mama’s sling. Congratulations to Joey and Jasmine!

**Praise God:** for watching over Ilyria and the Tell family, and for their contributions to the RICD center, where Joey repairs and prepares wheelchairs and walking aids and Jasmine works in the office managing the applications, databases and paperwork.

Margaret Matasic served with us in Honduras in 2003-5 and afterwards, began an outreach to the disabled in another part of the country, following the principles of sustainability we all learned from serving with CAMO (Central American Medical Outreach). She later founded Through the Roof Ministries in Akron. [http://throughtheroofministries.org](http://throughtheroofministries.org)

Margaret works with Hondurans at the TTRM warehouse and workshop in Jesus de Otoro, training them in disability ministry, including wheelchair seating and some physical therapy. In addition, Christian leaders in town are encouraged and equipped to minister to the disabled. The result? The needs of the disabled are being met year-round, and not just when a team of Americans shows up to do the work. Margaret shares

“There is now an ongoing ministry at the TTRM Jesus de Otoro center and therapy and school for those with disabilities is a weekly outreach, all year long. Thousands have heard the Gospel message, received Bibles and accepted Jesus as Savior.”

Wheels of Hope provide Through the Roof Ministries with $93,120 worth of durable medical equipment in 2011, providing hope all year.

**Great Overflow means Grand Opportunities — Patrick’s Warehouse Report**

I would like to say thank you for your support over the years. With your help we have been able to supply wheelchairs, walkers, crutches and other items to people worldwide. Our partnership with other ministries has made it possible to give equipment in Thailand, Chile, Bolivia, Uruguay, Paraguay, Honduras, Guatemala and other countries.

We are once again over flowing with gifts-in-kind from Invacare. We rent a 26 foot dock high truck and have been picking up two loads per day about once a month. We have sent two container loads to Thailand, two to Guatemala, one to Chile, two semi truck loads to Hope Haven International and three other smaller loads for distribution with our partners.

Two great needs that would help us in our recycling would be, a cardboard crusher and volunteers to dismantle aluminum and steel damaged items. We have a tall piles of all the above items. Our cardboard would bring a better return if it were in 700 pound bails. The aluminum and steel would get a better price per pound clean rather than with plastic, rubber or mixed metals.

We need volunteers to do the incoming inspection and inventory of donations. Every box needs to be opened to make sure it is what the label says, it is repairable or recyclable. Every wheelchair needs to be inspected for what repair is needed or if it is better off used for parts. So far this year we have about 500 wheelchairs inventoried, and I have three loads that have not been sorted for inventory. At least another 100 chairs remained and were just picked up on December 27th.

This year we have inventoried 560 wheelchairs from Invacare, and possibly another 100 will be inventoried. We have shipped a total of 702 wheelchairs, in addition to two extra containers worth of much-needed items like bedside commodes, walkers and rollators.

**Four 40’ containers were sent:**

1. 2 to Thailand/Pioneers of Hope valued at $226,365
2. 2 to Guatemala/Vine International valued at $189,399
1 20’ container was sent to Chile/Christo Ayuda valued at $44,180
2 small truckloads were given to Through the Roof for Honduras valued at $93,120
2 53’-semitrucks were given to Hope Haven Int’l Ministries valued at $118,000 for repair, reconditioning and world-wide distribution

10 wheelchairs were sent to Haiti via Zion UMC, $2,000
7 wheelchairs were sent to Dominican Rep. via Sanctuary of Praise $3,000

**Total wheelchairs sent: 702**
Total value of wheelchairs and other needed equipment: $675,064


We rejoice that 2011 ended in the black for Wheels of Hope, with the total financial donations increasing from $13,000 last year to almost $16,000 this year. We are especially thankful for our faithful financial supporters during what continue to be financially trying times.

**With an eye to the future, we look for God’s provision to**

- Improve our warehouse and workshop facility and obtain office space
- Improve warehousing and inventory control
- Expand and develop the volunteer corps, including Board of Directors
- Grow Director of Operations position from two days to full-time
- Provide assistance for shipping charges to the various missions
- Travel to the missions to train, assist and audit the distribution of DME
- Assist in developing distribution, training and fitting of wheelchairs

We now have a PayPal account set up through our website
www.wheelsofhope.org
Just click on the donate button to donate.

Financial donations can also be sent to our **new mailing address:**
9800 Morges Dr. SE,
Waynesburg, Ohio 44688

To donate a wheelchair or other durable medical or physical therapy equipment, contact our Director of Operations by phone 330-620-4214 or email patrick@wheelsofhope.org

**OUR MISSION**
To raise the poor with disabilities from the dust and give them a place of physical dignity spiritual regeneration in Christ and capability in Christ.

**CONTACT US**
patrick@wheelsofhope.org or call
Patrick’s cell: 330-620-4214

web: www.wheelsofhope.org
blog: wheelsofhope.wordpress.com

Join the Wheels of Hope group
and like the Wheels of Hope cause page on Facebook

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 gods continues to provide through your prayers, volunteer efforts and financial giving.
—Thank you