

Pat Simons' 1962 Willys wagon opens doors for Wheels of Hope

—by David Sullens, reprinted from *The Courier Express of western Pennsylvania*

Pat Simons uses his 1962 Willys wagon to open doors for a cause about which he is passionate — *Wheels of Hope*. *Wheels of Hope* is an organization that collects mobility aids — wheelchairs, crutches, canes, walkers, prosthetics — and reconditions them before sending them overseas to people in less developed or less fortunate countries who need them.



Pat Simons, pictured here with his wife, Mary, uses his 1962 Willys wagon as a vehicle to open doors for another of his passions, *Wheels of Hope*.

Simons' interest in the organization began with his daughter, Sarah, who, as he was taking her to school one day when she was 8 years old, heard about it on the radio.

The commentator made reference to people in another country "walking around on stumps" and about an organization that was attempting to help them.

After listening intently, Sarah asked Pat, "Can we get involved?"

Pat told her he would check on it. A month later, she asked again. And they did get involved.

But the operator of that organization moved it from Canton, Ohio to Colorado. It was not feasible to ship the donated equipment from the east side of the country to Colorado, so the Canton warehouse soon was home to a new organization — *Wheels of Hope* — with the same mission.

Refurbished equipment has been sent to Honduras, Guatemala, Bolivia, Peru and its current focus is Thailand.

At one point, Pat and Sarah went on a *Wheels of Hope* mission trip to Honduras.

Pat's interest in his Willys stems from his having owned one when he was in his 20s. He recalls that it was his "daily driver" and he very much enjoyed it but, over time, it deteriorated. He bought another one — with no engine — and intended to "make one from two" but then came marriage. With no time, he eventually sold both 30 years ago "to a guy who is just finishing the project now."

A few years ago, Simons started looking online for another Willys wagon. He found several, but most were too expensive. Finally he spotted one on Long Island that was priced at \$13,500. In six months that price had fallen to \$10,000, so he took his money and went to look at it. He bought it, he says, for \$9,250.

"The outside was like it is now," he said. "I've done nothing inside it yet and the engine still needs work."

He has driven the wagon in parades and last year started taking it to car shows, "mostly for exposure" for *Wheels of Hope*.

—Continued on page 2

Wheels of Hope is a 501(c)3
faith-based non-profit
organization with a govern-
ing Board of Directors.

Make checks payable to
Wheels of Hope
9800 Morges Rd. SE
Waynesburg, Ohio 44688
or donate through
www.wheelsofhope.org

Wheels of Hope 2018 Annual Financial Report

Volunteer Hours: approximately 920 through October

Total approximate value of volunteer hours at \$10/hr \$9200

164 wheelchairs received with other medical equipment

80 wheelchairs ready to ship in October

Total value of equipment to be shipped to people in need in Thailand in January 2019

(for 150 wheelchairs, plus mobility and bath aids and countless parts) approximately \$140,000

Treasurer's Report: November 2018 Board Meeting

January 1st beginning balance:	\$3,843.25
January - October Income:	\$5111.00 (additional need \$3300)
January - October operating expenses:	\$7014.44 (estimated annual \$8400)
November 1st cash balance:	\$1939.81

Approximate value/operating expenses \$149,200/8400 will be \$17.76 for each dollar spent in 2018!

Thank
you!

Pat Simons' 1962 Willys —continued from page 1

The fact that the Willys he owns today is a 1962, which was what he owned more than 30 years ago, he says is either coincidence “or a God thing.”

The Willys is “mechanically sound” but needs a valve job, he said. “If the engine was running properly it would do 70,” he said, “but now only about 50-60.

It is powered by a “Super Hurricane” flathead six cylinder engine. Power is transferred to either the rear or all four wheels through a 3-speed manual transmission with overdrive and a two-speed transfer case.

Simons, who is a factory representative for Mac Metal Sales, said he has replaced the wagon’s heater, “so now it does heat.”

He put new, larger all-weather radial tires on it and has replaced “lots of seals.” He still needs to replace the door seals and re-do the wagon’s body mounts, he said. He also has given it a new single barrel carburetor.

It had already been repainted when he bought it. He does not typically drive it in the winter months, but has on occasion. “I use it every chance I get,” he said.

Reprinted from *The Courier Express* http://m.thecourierexpress.com/pat-simons-willys-wagon-opens-doors-for-wheels-of-hope/article_dfce34d1-774f-59b8-aec5-92aa0e892a19.html?fbclid=IwAR0r1IfP4bVPQUNqMfQVEOF4X MfgPNnob8GkNulS2zBulR8TE19-Wef13f0

Editor’s note: In addition to their showing Pat’s Willys to promote Wheels of Hope, Pat and Mary collect used wheelchairs and walking and bath aids and deliver them to our Canton warehouse about twice a year. Pat has not only received donated equipment, but donated storage space from DuBois Harley Davidson and the use of vehicles from Plylers Environmental Solutions to transport the equipment to us. They also serve on the Board of Directors, and we are thankful for all they do!

Warehouse Director’s Report —by Patrick Rimke

We are thankful for all the support from everyone, praying, providing equipment and refurbishing donated equipment. We are compiling items for our next container to Thailand. We are planing on loading it in January 2019. Our goal is for one-hundred and fifty wheelchairs! We have about seventy five ready and many that

need refurbished.

Its amazing to see God provide equipment. Our website provides many donation offers, but some are a bit out of our fifty mile radius. We are offered wheelchairs in Florida, upper New York and even Oklahoma and California! We have had to forward these offers to Friends of the Disabled of Latin America (FRIDLA) and Joni and Friends (JAF).

We recently received thirty-two wheelchairs from MedWish based in downtown Cleveland, Ohio. They originally thought they only had about twenty to donate. They only ship wheelchairs that are complete, so we get the rest! Some need everything done, new upholstery, tires and foot or leg rests. The foot/leg supports are the first thing to get lost at grandma’s house!

We are in the process of reducing our foot print at the warehouse we have been in for 21 years. Our prayer request is that some day we can be on a ground floor somewhere with a bathroom and running hot water! God has supplied this space and He can supply another when the need arises.

We pray that the Lord would bring to *Wheels of Hope* new volunteers with a heart and vision to continue to work with God in this much needed ministry. In Luke chapter 14, are the words of Jesus to everyone involved ministering to the least of the least. Verse 13 is what *Wheels* and other ministries are doing, “But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind:” three out of four in Jesus’ list need not only mobility, but most important the Gospel of the Kingdom of God shown to them.

Our partners in Thailand, *The Wheelchair Project*, are presenting the Gospel of the Kingdom; the equipment is just a way of showing God’s compassion. Joesph and Jasmine Tell are at the center of the project along with missionaries volunteering from other organizations and local churches in Chiang Mai. Not only do they oversee distributions, but also have Thai believers involved wherever the distributions occur throughout Thailand and surrounding countries. They are receiving equipment from other organizations for distribution, not just *Wheels of Hope*, because the need is greater than we can provide. They are also providing mobility on a daily basis at the therapy offices and warehouse in Chiang Mai. For up-to-date information, check out the RICD Wheelchair Project Facebook page.

Our very dedicated team who are there most every Tuesday are eighty or better. They are an inspiration to me, I expect to keep doing this when I reach their age. I just had my sixty-seventh birthday.



Just some of the donated wheelchairs awaiting reconditioning by our team of Tuesday volunteers.

The sign in the background with the Quetzal flying over G.R.A.C.E. (the Guatemalan Relief and Craft Exchange) is from the organization that our founder, Mark Richard, first formed before helping us to create *Wheels of Hope* in 1997.

It is a reminder of God’s grace over this ministry for over 20 years!