

Our Volunteers Weather the Pandemic —by Patrick and Lynda Rimke

We are coming to the end of 2020 and reached our 23rd anniversary. In all these years, we never would of thought that we would slow down this much!



Loren and Larry shall return!

Since mid-March I have been working one or two days at the shop alone. The Pandemic has basically stopped all our faithful volunteers from making weekly workdays, because they are all in the most vulnerable age group, eighty years and older. At first, during lock down, I cleared off and moved things around from the benches and work tables in order to have a six foot distance. But the second summer spike and now the winter spike in infections has kept them home. Many are now caught up with other health issues and do not plan to return. One of most faithful volunteers, Frank Price, passed away early this year from a non-Covid cause. I have been repairing the rollers that he usually worked on, and boy do I miss him! I miss them all ...

Hats off to this weekly wheelchair crew that met every Tuesday and reconditioned wheelchairs and other walking aides for over 12 years!

While the threat of Covid keeps our remaining volunteers at home, I'm triaging boxes of donations from years ago, as far back as 2010 ... sorting things for future use and recycling what can never be used in our mission:

To collect, refurbish, and distribute used home medical equipment and wheelchairs for needy individuals outside of the USA.

To focus on catching up, I made a decision that we curtail receiving new donations for a season. I am referring emails and calls to other local places like Salvation Army. We already have a sizable amount equipment to recondition. We have over 75 wheelchairs, walkers and other items that need refurbishing to ship with our partners in the near future.

Wheels of Hope is not the only ministry affected by the Pandemic. Our Thailand partners were locked down and couldn't do distributions for three months. That is quite miraculous, in light of what is going on in other places we have served in Central and South America, which are still under lock-down, with many of the most vulnerable going hungry. Honduras was also hit with flooding and landslides after two hurricanes pummeled the country in October. Pray for these front line Christian friends and their witness, that they will regain the time they lost with distributions and bring many new believers into the Kingdom! God does use ALL things for His purposes.

Fresh Volunteers Are Always Welcome

Before the Pandemic, our crew worried that no other volunteers will be raised up to take their place. Let's prove them wrong! We continue to offer time spent in meaningful fellowship, while using your hands to help recondition wheelchairs and other mobility aids. Do your part to help disabled and disadvantaged people gain mobility and dignity, when our partners in developing nations gift them with your lovingly reconditioned wheelchairs or walking aids. Also, there is lunch!

Wheels of Hope has been providing equipment and the message of hope for everlasting life through Jesus Christ for twenty-two years, since 1997. We have had many very dedicated volunteers. Some came every now and then, others weekly.

Please pray how you or someone you know might answer the call to work with God in this need. It has been a blessing for all involved in this ministry, from those who help load containers on call, to youth groups that help recycle unusable items and clean the warehouse, to our weekly Tuesday crew. Who is God calling next?



But others, like Frank, will be greatly missed ...

Hats off to the weekly wheelchair crew that has met every Tuesday and Wednesday and reconditioned wheelchairs and other walking aides for over 12 years!

2020 Kimble Foundation Grant Furthers Recycling Efforts —by Patrick & Lynda Rimke

We would like to thank the Kimble Foundation for their continued support towards our long-overdue triage of piles and stuffed shelves filled with damaged donations not suitable to distribute overseas.



The overwhelmed warehouse space before recycling began

With the first grant from Kimble in 2019, our Board of Directors elected to allocate the funds for our Director of Operations, Patrick Rimke, to assess, sort, clean and move out these materials to recycling facilities, and to buy any parts needed to make broken equipment whole again to help those who need it most. The 2020 grant adds to these necessary funds.

The timing of 2020 funding has allowed for recycling to become our temporary mission shift as the Pandemic keeps our elderly volunteers safe at home. We are thankful for the freedom to downsize by ridding the warehouse of these non-usable things. For years, donations from Invacare Corporation *flowed in so fast** that we focused on the medical equipment that could be turned around most quickly to bless those in need. The Pandemic has allowed the opportunity for a needed shift, and God has covered Wheels of Hope with these generous grants out of the blue at exactly the right time!

Most everything we do is a form of re-purposing for distribution and use overseas or metals recycling. Every wheelchair, walker, set of crutches, cane or bedside commode that is usable or can be refurbished is kept out of a landfill. What is not usable can be scrapped: steel, aluminum and expended batteries. What is not usable or recyclable: worn vinyl seating, rubber tires and plastic parts, have to be removed from metals and discarded. We also discard circuit boards. These can be recycled, but the process is labor intensive and most U.S. recycling centers ship them to China. We no longer generate enough cardboard and paper products to recycle.

The Kimble Company has also donated a two yard trash container service since 2002. Our good stewardship of what God has provided for us makes it possible to only have it emptied once or twice a year. (And it still really bothers me that some material that fills the dumpster can't be re-purposed!)

Lastly, in line with our original and future mission, Patrick has used his "alone time" to concentrate on refurbishing complex wheelchair seating systems that require his expertise and creative talent as a former seating-specialist. These chairs are labor-intensive, but to the child who receives an expandable Tilt-in-Space system that gives him a brighter future free of complications from inferior seating, and for his family and caregivers, those hours are priceless!

** 2013 FDA regulations shut down all American corporate donors when wheelchairs were reclassified as "medical devices", a more stringent category that requires "greater oversight for consumer safety": "Classification is risk based ... Examples of medical devices include surgical lasers, wheelchairs, sutures, pacemakers, vascular grafts, intraocular lenses, and orthopedic pins." [http://www.fda.gov/downloads/RegulatoryInformation/Guidances/UCM127067.pdf] The result? All defective and customer-returned wheelchairs have been destroyed for seven years. Invacare is required to ship the wheelchairs that once helped people overseas to a nearby EPA certified scrap yard in Chicago.*



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

Your financial gifts are greatly appreciated.

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



The cleaned up 2020 workshop ready for elves in 2021—

and a very special wheelchair!

Prayer Requests and Praise Reports

For fresh volunteers to join us, and for the health of our older dedicated octogenarian volunteers
For new interest and involvement from local churches on Saturday Warehouse Whip-it events where we sort and clean with church groups, TBA
For new volunteers to serve one year on our Board of Directors that meets online 3-6 times a year, and for wisdom and planning for the future
For reversal of the 2013 FDA regulations!

For provision to also recycle what cannot be reconditioned thanks to a grant from the Kimble Foundation
For our faithful financial partners who have not stopped giving in 2020
For the hard working missionary team members and Thai professionals who distribute equipment and the love of Christ at the Wheelchair Project in Thailand