



REUNION FOR MOBILITY

Ronald (75, photo at bottom right) had always been active, working hard on the docks and in construction to support his family—until last year.

When a lingering sore on his leg refused to heal, doctors determined poor circulation was to blame. Eventually, that leg was amputated.

Since then, Ronald had been relying on crutches and the unwavering support of his wife, but mobility was still a constant challenge. Then, one day last November, the sound of voices outside their home caught their attention. A familiar face appeared, pushing a brand-new wheelchair.

It was Isaac, whose father had once captained a boat that Ronald had worked on for years. Now, two decades later, Isaac stood before him—not as the captain's son, but as a representative of our local distribution partner, Food for the Poor Jamaica. Isaac was there with a vision team from Free Wheelchair Mission (photo above, second row, center).

For Ronald, this moment marked more than just restored mobility. It was an unexpected reunion—one that was part of a larger gathering of old friends and longtime supporters, all united by a shared mission to provide mobility.

DONATE NOW

Provide the life-transforming gift of mobility and give someone renewed dignity, freedom, and independence.

FreeWheelchairMission.org/donate



OUR WORK IN JAMAICA

Jamaica, an island nation in the Caribbean, is home to 2.8 million people, including more than 420,000 individuals with disabilities.¹ Research from the University of the West Indies in Kingston indicates that one-third of physical disabilities in Jamaica are congenital, while two-thirds result from factors such as violent crimes, motor vehicle accidents, and chronic illnesses like diabetes and strokes. More than half of those with disabilities live in rural areas, where access to mobility aids is often limited.²

Since 2005, Free Wheelchair Mission has shipped 13,342 wheelchairs to Jamaica, nearly 9,000 of which have been distributed through our longtime partner, Food For The Poor (FFTP) Jamaica—the country's largest NGO. Since they began with us in 2014, FFTP has become a strategic partner, efficiently distributing wheelchairs and training sub-distribution partners to serve more individuals in need across the island. "These wheelchairs have been transformational to our organization and the individuals and institutions we serve," said David Shoucair of FFTP. "Our partnership creates a mission like no other and we are truly blessed to be able to enjoy the real meaning of Christian missionary work."

UNABASHED JOY

After waiting two painful years, Alexander rejoiced upon receiving a wheelchair.



In November 2024, FFTP hosted a long-awaited vision trip for Free Wheelchair Mission supporters—a journey years in the making. Originally planned for 2020, the trip was postponed multiple times due to pandemic-related travel restrictions and logistical challenges. When it finally came together, it was a meaningful reunion for a group of dedicated supporters, which included the chair of our Board of Directors, a board member, the chair of our Orange County Women's Council for Mobility, two church leaders, a couple who are longtime supporters, and our director of development. The team arrived on November 3, assembled wheelchairs on the 4th, and distributed them from the 5th to the 7th.

Among those who received a wheelchair from this team was Alexander (photo at bottom left), a 76-year-old handyman whose life changed unexpectedly two years ago, when he accidentally swallowed a fish bone. Initially dismissing it, he soon felt unbearable pain in his throat and stomach. He tried to ride his bicycle to the hospital but collapsed along the way. Strangers rushed him to the emergency room, where doctors discovered that the fish bone had severely damaged his digestive tract. After multiple surgeries, including a colostomy, Alexander was left too weak to walk.

As he waited to be fitted with a wheelchair, "Alexander shared quite a bit about his struggles since the accident," said team member Susan Griffiths, who listened and noted that "he just needed someone to validate his pain and show him love and compassion." Alexander's face lit up with joy the moment he sat in his new wheelchair, and he began praising God. His daughter was especially excited because the wheelchair would allow him to easily travel to a clinic every two days for necessary colostomy care—a journey that had been one of their biggest challenges.

Reactions by relatives like Alexander's daughter were not uncommon. "Jamaican family members are the primary caretakers for their disabled loved ones," said team member Russell Van Nuis, "so a wheelchair really can empower an entire family to pursue greater opportunities like school and employment." One such example is Cara (opposite page, top left), a 38-year-old mother of three. Complications from diabetes led to the amputation of one leg in 2016 and the other in 2021. Although she received prosthetic legs, it was still difficult for her to go anywhere beyond her home. Yet

¹ Calculation is based on 15% of Jamaica's population. World Bank, *Acting on Disability Discrimination in Jamaica*, April 18, 2016, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2016/04/18/acting-on-disability-discrimination-jamaica>.

² Floyd Morris, "Disability, Chronic Diseases and Access to Healthcare in Jamaica," *West Indian Medical Journal* 67, no. 5 (2018): 417, <https://doi.org/10.7727/wimj.2018.183>.



ASPIRING TEACHER

Mobility empowers Cara (above) to pursue an education for her kids and herself.



through it all, she stayed optimistic, determined, and resilient.

A firm believer in the power of education, Cara works tirelessly by raising poultry and fishing to support her children's studies. "Right now, all my kids are in high school," she said, "but I want them to go to college, and that's what I'm working toward." Her dream of earning her own college degree came closer to reality when she received a new wheelchair in early 2024. Mobility makes it possible for Cara to attend classes and pursue a degree in mathematics to someday become a math teacher—a career that would not only provide greater financial stability for her family but also allow her to help others access the education she values so deeply. "It is the way out of poverty."

REFLECTIONS FROM THE FIELD

Dozens of wheelchairs were distributed during the November vision trip, and each one transformed lives—not just for those who received wheelchairs, but also for those who helped distribute them. "Each of these people has a story that is worth telling," reflected team member Whitney Van Nuis, "and I was reminded that they are worthy of love and respect. I think about the people I met and continue to pray for them."

"I truly believe that not only did we see what God sees and wanted us to see, but we were also the hands and feet of Jesus," said Felix Lin, who was on his first vision trip after supporting us for more than a decade and becoming a member of our

board. "[In] the faces of the recipients, you will see joy, that not only the gift of mobility has given them, but joy, I believe, knowing that they are seen, that they are known and not forgotten, and that they are loved."

Susan Griffiths summed up how our partnership in Jamaica is about more than just giving away wheelchairs: "This wheelchair is delivered by someone who will listen to their story. It's given in love—love from God who sees their struggle, love from someone who cares enough to deliver it, and love from someone like you who cares enough to provide it."

With your continued support and our strong partnership with FFTP, we are ready to bring this love to even more people in Jamaica and beyond through the gift of mobility. As the team has reminded us, a wheelchair is more than just a means of mobility—it is also a vessel to deliver a message of love and joy to those who desperately need to hear it.

Blessings,



Don Schoendorfer

Don Schoendorfer
President and Founder
Free Wheelchair Mission

2025 **move** for mobility



This May, get moving for a great cause—anytime, anywhere—with the Move for Mobility!

Run, walk, hike, roll, swim, jump, bike, or do any activity you choose, anywhere, for any distance, while raising funds to provide wheelchairs for people with disabilities in developing countries.

The Move for Mobility is fully customizable. You can run on a treadmill or at an official 5K, half-marathon, or full marathon. You can hike a trail or walk around your neighborhood. You can cycle outdoors or do your miles on a stationary bike. It's all up to you! Complete your distance all at once or over a period of a few weeks.

Invite your friends, family, coworkers, church, sports teams, training partners, or other groups to form a team and Move for Mobility together!

Visit MoveforMobility.org for more information or to register for free!



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