

WHIRLWIND WHEELCHAIR

INTERNATIONAL

www.whirlwindwheelchair.org



NEWSNOTES
July 2010

Hope Again in Haiti



Fabienne, Wilguy, and Damesaau
at Saint Boniface Hospital

Damesaau ran outside when his house began shaking. A concrete block fell on him as he ran through the gate. Twelve year old Vladimir also suffered a spinal cord injury when the ceiling of his bedroom caved in on him during the earthquake last January.

We expected an atmosphere of profound personal loss as we traveled to Haiti in May. We found a remarkable strength and resilience in the Haitian people. Our visit coincided with the arrival of the RoughRiders we had ordered a few days
→



Volunteer Rachel Kishton with
Vladimir at Saint Boniface

"As a Physical Therapist and relief organizer working in Haiti after the earthquake, I saw first hand the advantages that the RoughRider has compared to standard wheelchairs for Haiti's unpaved roads and difficult conditions. Its durable design allows riders to go where they need to go."

~ **Mike Landry, PhD, Assistant Professor of Physical Therapy at The University of Toronto**

Haiti (continued from page 1)

after the quake. We focused first on those with spinal cord injuries at Saint Boniface Hospital and at Haiti Hospital Appeal. Mike Landry from Healing Hands and other visiting therapists were delivering outstanding care never before seen in Haiti.

Our goals were to ensure that the chairs were properly fit with individual care, to train the new riders in how to use the chairs most effectively, and to train local health workers to provide these services in the future.

The first 350 chairs were funded by the **Walkabout Foundation**. Walkabout also provided logistical support with considerable help from **Partners in Health (PIH)** with more than 25 years presence in Haiti. Our other donors and NGOs are funding 600 more RoughRiders that will arrive in Haiti over the next few months.

Whirlwind trained forty-six PIH health care workers and a team from Handicap International. The new PIH “accompagnateurs,” some of whom

have a disability, are providing follow up training so that the users get the greatest independence and mobility out of their new RoughRiders.

Whirlwind plans to collaborate with other groups to develop a sustainable rehabilitation infrastructure in Haiti that will endure as the relief efforts draw to a close. Project Medishare from the Univ. of Miami is planning to establish a Wheelchair Services Center in Port au Prince, which we hope to support with wheelchairs and training.

It was gratifying to see riders going where they couldn't go in standard wheelchairs, and to see the joy in their faces when they discovered their new freedom. We are looking forward to being part of building up long term local wheelchair capacity in Haiti.



Damesaau riding on a path in the community near Saint Boniface Hospital



Lisa Carnie taking Patrice on a training ride in Cap Haitien at Haiti Hospital Appeal

Latest Happenings

Dominican Republic Project

This summer Product Designer Aaron Wieler and Colombian Engineer Jaime Echeverry will be training assembly workers at a small shop in Santo Domingo which is only 330 miles from Port au Prince, Haiti.



Rachel fitting Pauline near Cange, Haiti

Computer Machined Jigs & Fixtures

These allow us to support small shops with advanced fabrication tools which will provide quality and precision previously only available in large factories. The new Dominican Republic shop and Fundacion Bertha O. de Osete in Mexico will be the first to use the new tools.



Ahmed is head of quality control at Fundacion Bertha

Clinton Global Initiative

In April, CGI-University recognized Whirlwind as an outstanding program for leveraging advances in technology in the service of public health. SFSU has committed itself, through Whirlwind, to advancing the CGI mission over the next five years.



Vladimir and Kenny celebrating after receiving their RoughRiders

RESNA Leadership Award

Whirlwind was honored to receive the RESNA Leadership Award at RESNA's 2010 convention in Las Vegas on June 29 for our work over the past three decades including our response to the earthquake in Haiti. RESNA was formerly the Rehabilitation Engineering Society of North America, but has grown to include all rehabilitation professions and now is known only by its acronym. In accepting the award, Executive Director Marc Krizack noted that of the many awards and recognition Whirlwind has received over the years, this was special since it came from our peers in the rehabilitation field.

Ramping Up for New Products

Our new Manager of Product Development, Matt McCambridge, brings a wealth of experience, proven commitment, and a deep understanding of design for the environments where our riders live. Recently, he has been working on a state-of-the-art supportive children's wheelchair with Whirlwind's characteristic rugged durability. On this chair, he has collaborated with experts in South Africa including Shona McDonald who is widely respected for her leadership in the field.



Matt McCambridge

Matt's appointment is expected to usher in a period of rapid product development and upgraded quality control systems at Whirlwind franchise manufacturers around the globe.

Continue Doing What You Can

Damesaau, Vladimir, and Fabienne are members of an exceptional group - **the first large group of spinal cord injury survivors in Haiti ever.** How did this happen? The doctors certainly deserve credit and so do these tenacious survivors. **But, you have played a critical role with your donation.** Durable and functional wheelchairs are critical for health, rehabilitation, and accessing opportunity. Thank you again for joining with us.



Neffalie at Partners In Health

Whirlwind is growing fast with new staff, new manufacturers, a new kid's chair, and a global vision. More than ever we need your support, especially our general fund, to carry forward the work in Haiti and beyond.

Will you make a follow up donation today?

Send your check or donate online at:

whirlwindwheelchair.org/donate.htm

*As you help Whirlwind,
you help change the world.*