



**Transcription for:
Haiti Project with The Walkabout Foundation**

Wheelchairs for Haiti

Carolina Gonzalez-Bunster, Co-Founder of The Walkabout Foundation

Carolina Gonzalez-Bunster: The Walkabout Foundation's mission is two fold. It's to find a cure for paralysis by funding scientific research, and also to donate wheelchairs to those in need around the world. I came to Haiti on behalf of the Walkabout Foundation six days after the earthquake. I saw the devastating need. I saw that people needed wheelchairs; people were lying on the street because they were injured, and they were imprisoned because of these injuries. In the worst of cases they were being pushed around in wheelbarrows or in supermarket carts.

Marc Krizack, Executive Director of Whirlwind Wheelchair International

Marc Krizack: When we heard about the earthquake in Haiti we immediately realized that we could play a significant role. Immediately, even though we didn't have the money ourselves, we ordered 350 wheelchairs. And then along came our angel, which was the Walkabout Foundation. They saw a video of us, and they realized that this really was something different. Since 1979 we've been designing wheelchairs that are built and used in developing countries, the idea being that they can be built at low cost from locally-available materials. They can be easily repaired. Our designs are made so that they can be very usable. Our founder is Ralf Hotchkiss who himself is a paraplegic and has been designing wheelchairs pretty much since 1966 after he became disabled. So we understand the real conditions which people use wheelchairs need to operate under in order to live their daily lives.

Haiti Hospital Appeal, Cap Haitien

Carolina Gonzalez-Bunster: So here we are in this hospital in Cap Haitien. We are here to donate and give out 18 wheelchairs to 18 spinal cord injured patients. The 18 spinal cord injured patients have been brought here, and prior to us coming they didn't have a wheelchair — they had nothing, and they were lying on their beds, as you can see. A wheelchair will give them a new life, and will give them mobility and

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will give them freedom and will give them independence and will allow them to reintegrate themselves into their families, into the community, and into society.

Haitian young man: Bonjour.

Conor Shapiro, Director of St. Boniface Haiti Foundation

Conor Shapiro: We're located here in Fonde Blanc Haiti since the earthquake. We have received about 15 spinal cord injuries, and that is who Walkabout Foundation has come and helped today. You guys have come with 15 wheelchairs from Whirlwind International — I think they are called RoughRiders — and they are extremely helpful for the difficult terrain out here. We're out in the middle of the countryside where a hospital... it's about 60 beds. This is a new venture for us to take care of those with spinal cord injuries, especially after the earthquake, and we'll be doing it going forward. So we're really happy to have the support of the Walkabout Foundation.

Haitian man, translated from French: During the earthquake when I felt my house shaking, I went outside and started running. Then a big block fell on the gate and the gate fell on my back.

Haitian woman singing (melody "How Great Thou Art"):

Dieu tout puissant, quand mon cœur considère,
Tout l'univers créé par Ton pouvoir;
Le ciel d'azur, les éclairs, le tonnerre,
Le clair matin ou les ombres du soir:
De tout mon être, alors s'élève un chant,
Dieu tout puissant, que Tu es grand.
De tout mon être, alors s'élève un chant,
Dieu tout puissant, que Tu es grand.

The distribution and provision of these chairs started a successful partnership between the Walkabout Foundation and Whirlwind Wheelchair. However, these wheelchairs represent only a small step in the recovery of Haiti and the start of a Haitian Disability Awareness Movement. Both Walkabout and Whirlwind are interested in the development of long-term solutions for these riders and the many others who will receive RoughRiders and other wheelchairs in the coming months.

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