

**FREE  
WHEELCHAIR  
MISSION**



**2017**  
ANNUAL REPORT

I AM  
ONE IN A  
MILLION

TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH THE GIFT OF MOBILITY™

## Free Wheelchair Mission

is a humanitarian, faith-based, nonprofit organization that provides wheelchairs at no cost to people with disabilities living in developing nations. In collaboration with a network of like-minded partners, Free Wheelchair Mission has provided more than one million wheelchairs to those in need in developing nations since 2001, providing dignity, independence, and hope through the gift of mobility.

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## ONE IN A MILLION

Greetings, Friends of Free Wheelchair Mission:

It is often said that a remarkable person is “one in a million.” In the case of young Flor, a 12-year-old girl from Peru, that is literally the case. Flor was the recipient of our **one-millionth** wheelchair—a miraculous event documented by the PBS series *The Visionaries* and made possible by your generous support.

In many ways, all of 2017 was a celebration of our first one million wheelchairs, and in many ways this annual report is, too. Of course, Flor is not our only “one in a million” recipient. In these pages you will read about Lucho, a hardworking man in Peru, and Hien, a graphic design student in Vietnam. In addition to wheelchair recipients, you will also get to know Jenean, a long-time supporter of and advocate for Free Wheelchair Mission, and Nuka, our new executive director. As you read, you will discover that each person involved with Free Wheelchair Mission is unique—indeed, **one in a million**—and that includes you.

Thank you for your generous support. Because of you, our dedicated staff, and our faithful distribution partners, Free Wheelchair Mission has transformed more than one million lives through the gift of mobility. Now we look ahead with great anticipation as we hope to distribute our next million wheelchairs by 2025.

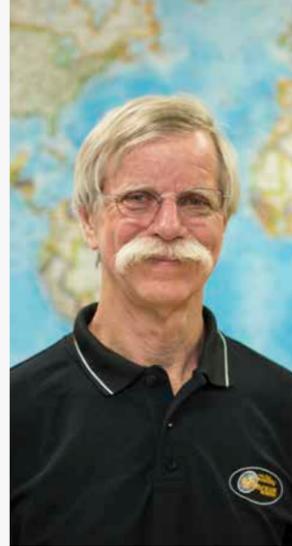
Thank you, from the staff and board of directors at Free Wheelchair Mission, for allowing us to continue in this great and important work—one wheelchair, one person, and one transformed life at a time.

Blessings,



Don Schoendorfer  
Founder and President

In 2017, shortly after the distribution of our one-millionth wheelchair, we mourned the loss of Laurie Schoendorfer, Don’s wife of 42 years and co-founder of Free Wheelchair Mission. We will forever celebrate her legacy of compassion and generosity. She was truly one in a million.



## NEED & VISION

BECAUSE NO ONE SHOULD HAVE TO CRAWL

### THE NEED IS GREAT

For people with disabilities living in the developing world, the gift of mobility means freedom, independence, and hope. Without this gift, more than 70 million people live in helplessness and despair.

Already suffering from the pain and isolation of a physical disability, many must endure further burdens—forced to crawl on the ground and often unable to leave their homes or even care for their own basic needs.

### THE SOLUTION IS SIMPLE

Our wheelchairs are simple, cost-effective, and highly functional. They are designed to be resilient enough to withstand regular use in rugged terrain that is common in the developing world.

Our wheelchair design and provisioning model allow us to maximize our impact around the globe, striving toward our goal of providing the transforming gift of mobility to as many people as possible while still maintaining a high standard of excellence. We partner with like-minded organizations to reach people in some of the most remote regions on the planet.

### YOUR IMPACT

When you give the gift of mobility, you give someone the chance to breathe fresh air, visit friends and neighbors—even go to school or find employment. The transforming gift of mobility changes everything. Mobility means independence, the ability to participate in society and earn a living. It means dignity, leaving behind the days of living on the ground and being an outcast.

In 2017 we celebrated one million lives transformed, but many more people still need our help. Get involved today and you will bring transformation that opens doors for individuals around the world.

Flor, the 12-year-old recipient of our one-millionth wheelchair



# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

2017 OUTCOMES



When I joined Free Wheelchair Mission in February of 2017, Don and the team were literally counting down to the distribution of our one-millionth wheelchair. It was an incredibly exciting time, and I felt blessed to be part of such a significant milestone for the organization. Despite the incredible work of Free Wheelchair Mission since 2001, the need for mobility solutions in the developing world continues to be great. My job, as executive director, is to ensure that FWM is an effective and efficient organization, maximizing value and minimizing cost to sustain longevity as we pursue our founder's vision and our ambitious goals. I am pleased to share these three highlights from fiscal year 2017.

Nuka Solomon  
Executive Director

## DISTRIBUTION PARTNER TRAINING PROGRAM

Since 2012, more than 850 people have attended trainings for FWM distribution partners, designed to increase the effectiveness, utilization, sustainability, and safety of the products that we provide. Training in Central America has been especially important, and in 2017 a regional coordinator was hired to increase the impact of wheelchair programs in the region. By helping distribution partners develop efficient, high-quality processes, we hope to enable deeper transformation for every wheelchair recipient by preparing to meet their specific mobility needs.



## THE VISIONARIES DOCUMENTARY

In April of 2017, a film crew from *The Visionaries*, a PBS program hosted by actor and philanthropist Sam Waterston, traveled with Don Schoendorfer to document the distribution of Free Wheelchair Mission's one-millionth wheelchair. The documentary *Because No One Should Have to Crawl* is expected to air on PBS stations across the country beginning in early 2018, making it accessible to more than 70 million households, raising awareness of the need for mobility solutions in the developing world.



## RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT TEST TRACK

In partnership with The South Dakota School of Mines & Technology and RPM & Associates, Free Wheelchair Mission constructed a whole-wheelchair test lab that is scheduled to make its debut in February 2018. The new test lab is expected to accelerate the product improvement program and provide reproducible data on FWM's wheelchairs by compressing a full year of field testing into a few hundred hours of lab testing.



# STORY FROM THE FIELD | PERU

53-YEAR-OLD LUCHO'S STORY

Fifty-three years ago, a baby boy named Lucho was born. He was a healthy, vigorous child—his parents' firstborn—who loved to run, jump, climb, and do what every small child loves to do.

His life took a drastic turn when he was diagnosed with polio at the age of four.

Lucho lost mobility. By the time he was ready for elementary school, he needed the help of his friends to get there. Those dear friends would lift him into a wheelbarrow and push him to and from school, taking turns to ensure that Lucho never missed a single day.

*"I never had a wheelchair before, so I would crawl to where I needed to be."*

However, as the years passed it was no longer feasible for Lucho's friends to help him this way. Lucho had to drop out of middle school and stay home. "I did what I could to help my parents with household chores," recalled Lucho. "I never had a wheelchair before, so I would crawl to where I needed to be."

Lucho has five younger siblings and currently lives with one of his brothers, who helps him cover some of his expenses.

Lucho does have a job as the supervisor of an auto shop, but he has never earned enough to buy a wheelchair. Each morning, Lucho would crawl from his brother's house to his workplace, and every evening, he would crawl back home after a full day's work.

In March 2017, torrential rains devastated parts of Peru, drenching the hillsides, triggering mudslides, and causing rivers to overflow. Roads,

farms, and homes were washed away. Lucho and his brother lost almost everything, but thankfully, the structure of their home remained intact. After a strenuous clean-up effort, they were able to move back in.

Lucho heard that Camino de Vida Church, Free Wheelchair Mission's distribution partner in Peru, would be coming to his area to deliver wheelchairs. He immediately submitted a request and was soon fitted with a new GEN\_2 wheelchair.

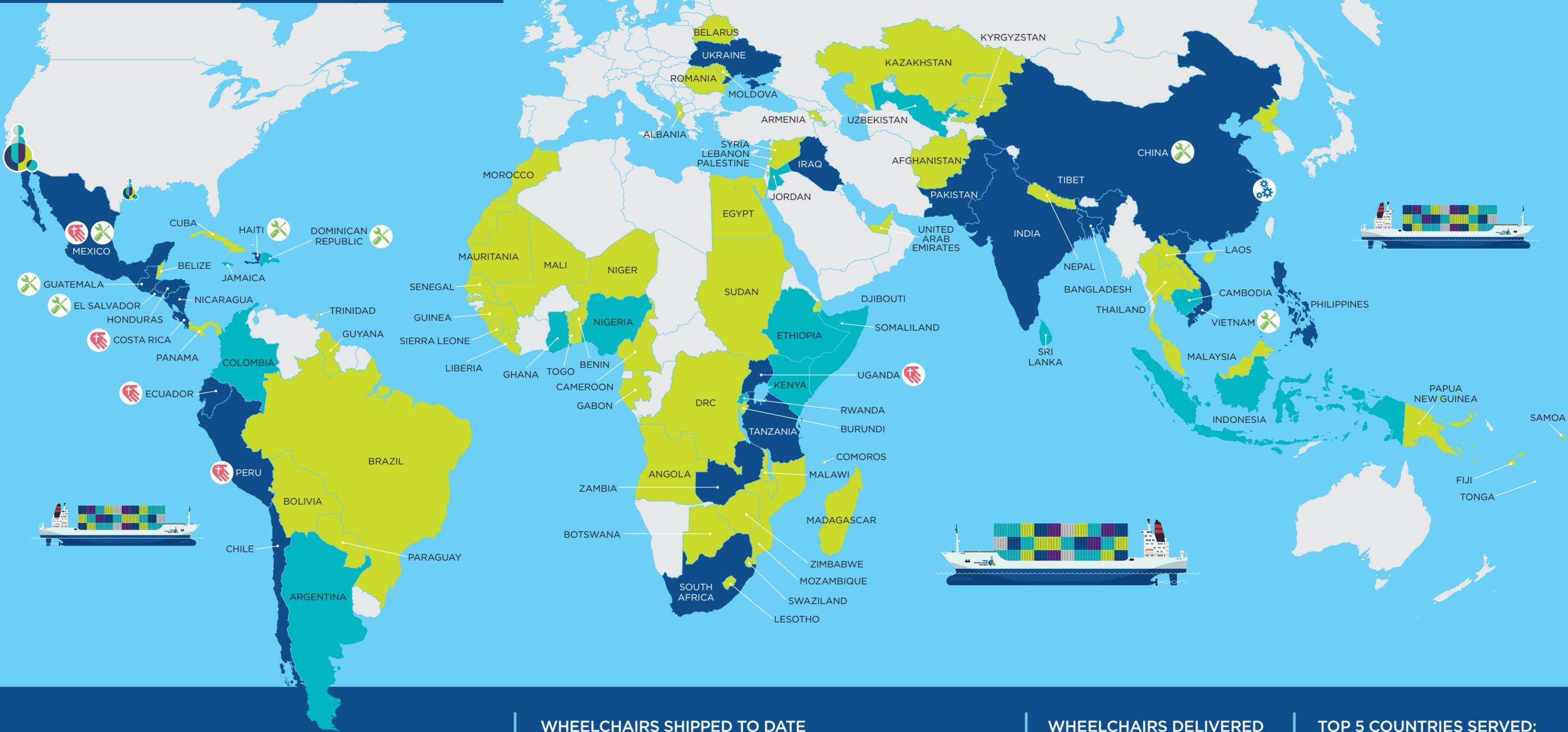
Today, Lucho no longer has to crawl. "I can use this to go to work every day," he said. "I'm very thankful to God and to you for giving me this opportunity to improve my quality of life."

*"I'm very thankful to God and to you for giving me this opportunity to improve my quality of life."*



# GLOBAL IMPACT

## FISCAL YEAR 2017



-  PARTNER TRAINING IN FY 2017
-  VISION TRIPS IN FY 2017
-  POINT OF MANUFACTURE
-  FREE WHEELCHAIR MISSION HEADQUARTERS
-  REGIONAL LOCATION

### WHEELCHAIRS SHIPPED TO DATE



### WHEELCHAIRS DELIVERED

1,005,907

### TOTAL COUNTRIES

93

### TOP 5 COUNTRIES SERVED:

1. VIETNAM — 153,971
2. INDIA — 97,470
3. CHINA — 88,790
4. PERU — 63,922
5. PHILIPPINES — 39,600

# PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH THE GIFT OF MOBILITY™

Because our mission is to provide the transforming gift of mobility to people with disabilities in developing nations as motivated by Jesus Christ, we give people more than free wheelchairs. We work alongside other humanitarian organizations to help address poverty-related problems for people living in some of the poorest communities on Earth.



## FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY

**Founder:** Larry Ward

**President:** Gary Edmonds (pictured)

**Global Headquarters:** Phoenix, AZ

**Mission:** Ending poverty, together.

**Purpose:** Together we follow God's call responding to human suffering and graduating communities from extreme poverty.

**History:** Food for the Hungry has worked since 1971 to serve the most vulnerable people on Earth through purposeful relief and development.

**Approach:** We provide life-changing resources such as clean water, medical aid, food, equal educational opportunities to girls and boys, vocational training, and empowerment in the midst of unimaginable hardships.

**Core Programs:** Child Sponsorship, Agriculture, Health, Education, Livelihoods, Food Security, Social Behavioral Change, Spiritual Development, Disaster Preparedness & Response

**Where does your organization serve?** Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean

**Who does your organization serve?** The most vulnerable, with children being a barometer for a community's success and well-being.

**How long have you been working with FWM's program?** Since 2014

**How does FWM's program support your mission?** FWM's partnership and life-changing provision of wheelchairs (and technical support) enables children and adults living with disabilities to embrace greater hope for their future, possess a stronger vision of rising from the grip of poverty, and pursue fullness of life in Christ.

**Number Served through FWM's Program:** 4,400

**How can we learn more about your organization?** Visit our website: [www.fh.org](http://www.fh.org)

Special thanks to Andrew Crawford, Director of Global Commodity Resourcing at Food for the Hungry, for contributing to this spotlight.



# STORY FROM THE FIELD

# VIETNAM

## 22-YEAR-OLD HIEN'S STORY

Hien was born to a loving family in Vietnam. She was an excellent student, but at the age of eight, she began to lose the ability to walk and was forced to take an extended leave from school to undergo medical tests. Doctors were unable to determine the cause of her condition, even after testing samples taken from her spinal cord—a procedure that inflicted great pain upon her. Doctors finally discovered a tumor on her spine and performed surgery to remove it.

Hien recovered from the operation and regained mobility after undergoing rigorous physical therapy. She was able to return to school; however, her studies were interrupted again after she took a tumble down a high, steep stairwell at school, horrifying the classmates who witnessed it.

*"... provided me with a wheelchair that [have] become my new legs."*

Hien again lost mobility, but this time, the damage was permanent. Subsequent surgeries and physical therapy were not able to help her recover. She dropped out of school. Her parents desperately wanted to get her a wheelchair, but they could not afford one. Left confined to her home, Hien grew withdrawn, afraid to even venture outside.

In 2013, Hien connected with *Giving It Back To Kids*, our distribution partner in Vietnam, who gave her a GEN\_2 wheelchair. "Life changed tremendously from that point," Hien said. With her wheelchair, she could cook, take care of herself, and become more independent.

*"I would not be living today if it wasn't for the generosity of these people."*

After hearing an encouraging message to *never give up* by Nick Vujicic (who happened to be our guest speaker at *Miracle of Mobility* in 2015), Hien was inspired to go back to school, but she couldn't afford to. *Giving It Back To Kids* stepped in once again, helping Hien enroll in a graphic design program. She began her studies in December of 2016, fulfilling her dream of continuing her education.

"I am forever grateful to all of the people who lovingly and generously provided me with a wheelchair that [have] become my new legs," said Hien through tears. "I would not be living today if it wasn't for the generosity of these people."



To hear more about Hien's story, watch her video at [freewheelchairmission.org/hien](http://freewheelchairmission.org/hien)



# FISCAL YEAR 2017 FINANCIALS

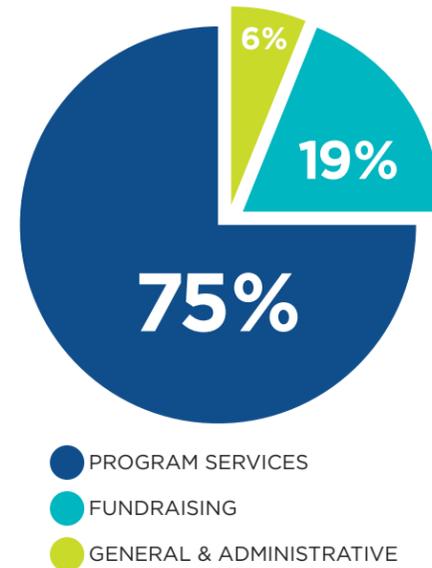
In 2017, we continued to strive for excellence by maintaining a 75% program ratio as we distributed more than 72,000 wheelchairs. We continue to transform lives through the gift of mobility, thanks to the unique partnership we have with our distribution partners and donors like you.

NOTE: Fiscal years reflect July 1 through June 30 of 2017, 2016, and 2015, respectfully.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION			
Assets	2017	2016	2015
Total Current Assets	\$2,840,611	\$1,714,776	\$1,756,157
Other Assets	\$408,376	\$376,667	\$728,746
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$3,248,987</b>	<b>\$2,091,443</b>	<b>\$2,484,903</b>
Liabilities & Net Assets	2017	2016	2015
Total Current Liabilities	\$372,460	\$120,161	\$208,591
Deferred Liability	\$177,007	\$157,429	\$145,459
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$549,467</b>	<b>\$277,590</b>	<b>\$354,050</b>
Net Assets:			
Unrestricted/Undesignated	\$2,010,287	\$973,740	\$793,629
Temporarily Restricted	\$689,233	\$840,113	\$1,337,224
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$2,699,520</b>	<b>\$1,813,853</b>	<b>\$2,130,853</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$3,248,987</b>	<b>\$2,091,443</b>	<b>\$2,484,903</b>

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES			
Support & Revenue	2017	2016	2015
Contributions	\$8,292,717	\$6,938,516	\$7,152,693
Gift-in-Kind	\$2,318,759	\$3,027,237	\$3,251,469
Other Revenue	\$108,985	\$96,749	\$110,691
<b>Total Support and Revenue</b>	<b>\$10,720,461</b>	<b>\$10,062,502</b>	<b>\$10,514,853</b>
Expenses	2017	2016	2015
Program Services	\$7,357,811	\$8,215,792	\$7,625,009
General and Administrative	\$613,151	\$552,252	\$506,292
Fundraising	\$1,863,832	\$1,611,458	\$1,496,391
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$9,834,794</b>	<b>\$10,379,502</b>	<b>\$9,627,692</b>
Net Assets	2017	2016	2015
Change in Net Assets	\$885,667	(\$317,000)	\$887,161
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	\$1,813,853	\$2,130,853	\$1,243,692
<b>Net Assets, End of Year</b>	<b>\$2,699,520</b>	<b>\$1,813,853</b>	<b>\$2,130,853</b>

## Expense Allocation



As a result of our financial transparency and accountability efforts, we are proud to receive the highest ratings from the following charity rating organizations:



Commitment to Transparency  
Recognized by Intelligent Philanthropy



# STORY OF A SUPPORTER | JENEAN HILL



Jenean Hill has been supporting Free Wheelchair Mission for more than a decade, ever since hearing Don Schoendorfer speak about the global need for wheelchairs at a missions-related event. Moved by compassion, Jenean approached

the Free Wheelchair Mission staff afterward and began to get involved, offering to do “little things here and there,” as she put it.

Jenean not only became a volunteer and donor, she became one of Free Wheelchair Mission’s biggest champions, taking every opportunity to help increase awareness of the need for mobility around the world.

She has held client-appreciation parties where she shares the vision of Free Wheelchair Mission and encourages others to give. She and her

husband have invited students to assemble wheelchairs. She has ordered large numbers of Free Wheelchair Mission holiday cards so she could give them to others and help spread the word, expanding the donor base.

Several years ago, Jenean was diagnosed with cancer. Throughout her treatment, many people—some of whom she had never met before—rallied to support her, assisting with medical visits, shopping, and other needs. “I guess this was like what I was doing for people I don’t even know in other countries,” she said. “I was taking care of strangers, and now, strangers were taking care of me.”

Thankfully, Jenean’s treatments have been successful, although she still experiences physical pain on occasion. Jenean might not be able to go overseas on a vision trip, but she doesn’t need to. She has already been making a difference all over the world, right from where she is, using talents and abilities that she already has.

## MAJOR CORPORATE SUPPORTERS

Our special thanks to these organizations for their significant financial support in 2017. Their generosity helped transform thousands of lives.

- |                                      |  |                                  |                               |
|--------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ACCO Brands Corporation              | The Capital Group Companies, Inc.          | Har-Bro, Inc.                    | Right at Home, Inc.           |
| Advisors Mortgage Group Headquarters | CapRock Partners                           | Investors Management Corporation | Rubin Postaer and Associates  |
| Alliance Environmental Group, Inc.   | Christ the Ray of Hope Property Management | Leets Consortium                 | Steven Label Corporation      |
| Applied Medical                      | Coop Properties                            | loanDepot                        | The SoCo Institute, Inc.      |
| Brookfield Los Angeles Builders      | Edwards Lifesciences, LLC                  | Modern Process Equipment, Inc.   | The Visionaries, Inc.         |
| The Bruery                           | Essendant Corporate                        | Open Door Packaging              | Watkins Commercial Properties |
|                                      | FOAM-iT                                    | PAAMCO                           | Wells Fargo Advisors, LLC     |



BECAUSE  
NO ONE  
SHOULD  
HAVE TO  
CRAWL



FREE  
WHEELCHAIR  
MISSION

[1 million]

CELEBRATING ONE MILLION WHEELCHAIRS

[www.freewheelchairmission.org](http://www.freewheelchairmission.org)