



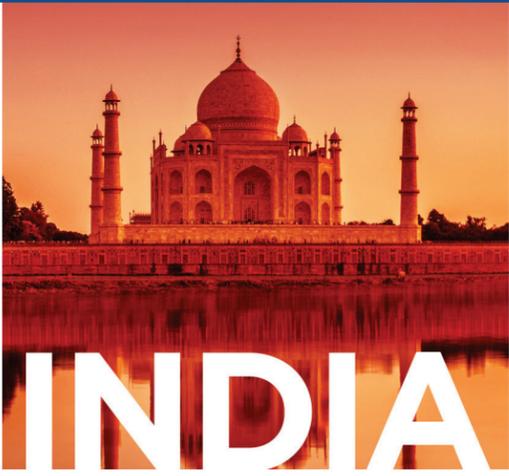
Network of Caring (NOC) is the philanthropic arm of Network TwentyOne, a leadership development organization founded by Jim and Nancy Dornan in 1990. Through this network, independent business owners generously support NOC initiatives around the world, including wheelchair distribution partnerships with FWM in South Africa and Ukraine.

This collaboration began when Jim, an aerospace engineer, read a 2005 issue of *Reader's Digest* during a flight and became intrigued by a story about FWM founder Don Schoendorfer. The account of Don's early efforts to provide mobility resonated with Jim, whose son was born with spina bifida: he and Nancy believed that anyone could accomplish great things, whether living with a disability or not, and wanted to help empower others around the world.

Jim passed away in 2013. Four years later, Nancy and their son, Dave, surprised Don with the Jim Dornan Legacy Award, an honor that recognizes key partners who are making a difference. To date, NOC has donated 13,650 wheelchairs through FWM.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Nancy Dornan (right) presents Don Schoendorfer (left) with the Jim Dornan Legacy Award in recognition of this key partnership.



WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

As home to one of the world's oldest enduring civilizations, it is perhaps fitting that India is also the "birthplace" of Free Wheelchair Mission.

It was here that we gave away our first four wheelchairs during a short-term mission trip in 2001. Little did we know that this was just the start.

Over the next 13 years, we would ship 97,470 wheelchairs to India, placing it among the top five countries we have served. However, our efforts in India paused in 2014 as we took some time to reassess our distribution partnerships and determine how we could best serve people with disabilities in the world's second-most-populous nation.

After a three-year hiatus, we were delighted to resume shipments of wheelchairs to India in 2017, in collaboration with our new distribution partner, India Christian Ministries (ICM).

DISABILITY IN INDIA

India is home to nearly 1.3 billion people and is projected to overtake China as the world's most populous country by 2028.

The economy is growing—India lifted 271 million people out of poverty between 2006 and 2016, according to a recent UN report—but resources are still stretched for much of the population. Half of the world's orphans are in India, and child labor affects an estimated 30 million children throughout the country.



Watch the story of Lotus Blossom, one of FWM's first four wheelchair recipients.

http://bit.ly/fwm_lotus



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Although caste-based discrimination was outlawed in 1955, its legacy persists. Opportunities for education, employment, and participation in community are often limited for individuals who are stigmatized for reasons including social class and disability.

At least one in 12 households has a member living with a disability; these families tend to have lower incomes than the national average. Nearly half of the households surveyed reported a belief that disability is a divine curse. These attitudes further hinder people with disabilities from acceptance and inclusion in society.

Children who live with disabilities are less likely to attend school. The resulting illiteracy factors into high unemployment rates for adults with disability, and the cycle of poverty continues.

“I’M MORE INDEPENDENT NOW”

Korrapati, a single mom, can better care for her two kids with the help of a wheelchair.



For a woman living with a disability in India, the challenges only multiply.

KORRAPATI’S STORY

Korrapati is a 31-year-old single mother who lives in Andhra Pradesh (see opposite page for map) in southeastern India. After losing her right leg in an accident when she was eight years old—accidents are a common cause of disability here—Korrapati was unable to walk unassisted. She could be carried places when she was younger, but as she grew, mobility became increasingly difficult.

Her marriage was fine for the first few years, but her husband soon began to complain about the burden he felt was imposed on him by her disability. He argued that her parents should compensate him for his troubles in taking her into his household. Humiliated, Korrapati was forced to ask her parents to make regular payments to him.

Korrapati’s husband eventually abandoned the family. In order to provide the support and care that her two children needed, Korrapati placed them in a government-run boarding school: an option generally avoided by middle-class families that have the means to pay for private schools. Korrapati tried to find work, but without mobility, her options were limited.

An ICM team visited Korrapati at her home. After assessing that one of our wheelchairs would be suitable for her, they fitted her with a new GEN_2—the first wheelchair she had ever had. ICM also trained Korrapati in wheelchair use and maintenance, and taught her pressure-relief exercises that are vital to her overall health. “FWM and ICM are providing a very good service to society,” she told us. “I’m so happy now.”

“A FEARLESS, EDUCATED SOCIETY”

The disability rights movement is growing in India, but there is much work to be done as leaders strive to establish a basic foundation upon which to build. “The problem is not how to wipe out differences between people,” shared an ICM representative, “but how to unite them despite the differences.”

ICM’s strategy is to develop community by developing leaders, including women and



FREEDOM FOR TWO

After 38 years, Mohan received his first wheelchair. “Now, I can be independent and do what I can to help my wife out.”

children, with the goal of creating “a fearless, educated society which is economically, socially, and politically sound, with high moral values, where there is no bias on the basis of caste, religion and gender.” This vision includes providing access to services and opportunities for people living with disabilities in order to maximize their potential and achieve full integration into their communities.

MOHAN’S STORY

Mohan, 41, lost mobility to polio when he was three years old and had been unable to move from place to place on his own. His parents took care of him until he got married; then, his wife became his primary caregiver.

Mohan often felt like a burden to her, wishing he could work and fulfill more household responsibilities. “If I had a wheelchair, I could do my part,” he lamented.

After receiving his application for a wheelchair, ICM sent a technician, trained by the FWM medical programs team, to Mohan’s home to take measurements and fit him with a GEN_3 wheelchair, which folds for easy passage through his home’s narrow doorways. Mohan expressed deep gratitude for his wheelchair, which he could not afford on his own. “I will tell others living with disability about Free Wheelchair Mission.”

Whenever we give someone a wheelchair, we want them to know that they matter—that they are seen, known, and loved. We want them to know that they aren’t cursed, but rather, that they are made in the image of their Creator.

The gift of mobility empowers mothers like Korrapati and husbands like Mohan to contribute to their families and express love and care to their loved ones. The gift of mobility also helps break down social barriers that have stood for centuries.

Together, with distribution partners including ICM and supporters like you, we can continue to serve the estimated 75 million people in the world who still need a wheelchair.

Together, we can continue to make an impact in families, communities, and nations across the globe.



Blessings,

Don Schoendorfer

Don Schoendorfer
Founder and President
Free Wheelchair Mission