



COVID-19

Linh, age 40, Vietnam



THE MISSION CONTINUES

We at Free Wheelchair Mission have been thinking about you and praying for you during these difficult times.

No one knew what to expect when the coronavirus outbreak first began. Out of an abundance of caution, we spent weeks developing a detailed COVID-19 contingency and response plan, which was implemented starting on March 11th. Our staff has been working remotely for the time being, and thankfully, remains healthy and safe.

We had to quickly adapt in order to continue our work, as did our distribution partners around the world. In El Salvador, FUSAL and World Vision took part in emergency relief efforts with their local governments. In Kenya, BethanyKids converted their facilities into a COVID-19 crisis response center. In Argentina, CILSA supported their communities by distributing food and keeping in touch with families. In Ghana, the staff of CEPD began working from home and are currently awaiting a shipment of wheelchairs to distribute. A number of our partners, such as the Rotary Club in Brazil, have continued to deliver and fit wheelchairs to individuals in their homes while following all guidelines and safety precautions.

The need for wheelchairs remains great. In fact, children and adults who live with disabilities in developing nations need wheelchairs now more than ever.

DONATE NOW

Provide medical supplies and wheelchairs to our communities worldwide by giving to the Medical and Mobility Emergency Fund.

freewheelchairmission.org/emergency



**FREE
WHEELCHAIR
MISSION**



DISABILITY AND COVID-19

We might all be familiar with guidelines on washing our hands and maintaining social distancing, but for individuals in the developing world—especially those who live with disabilities—these guidelines may not apply or may be impossible to follow.

Hand washing can become a major undertaking when one lacks running water inside their home. Water might have to be transported from a local well in heavy canisters and sanitized by boiling before use. And for someone who cannot walk and has no wheelchair, they might have to crawl on the ground, walk on their hands, or lean on walls for support, increasing their chances of touching surfaces contaminated with coronavirus.

Social distancing may not be practical for those who live in tight quarters with multiple family members, nor would maintaining a six-foot distance from others when one lacks mobility and relies on help to move from place to place. Should someone who cannot walk get sick and require medical care, they would have to be

carried to the nearest clinic or hospital if they do not have a wheelchair, further limiting their ability to maintain social distancing.

Those who do have wheelchairs face unique challenges related to COVID-19. For example, wheelchair tires can be contaminated by infected droplets on the ground. In addition, there are multiple points of contact on a wheelchair that must be disinfected regularly. For this reason, our team distributed a helpful guide providing COVID-19 precautions specifically for our wheelchair recipients and their caregivers.

In the communities we serve, care providers including family members, doctors, nurses, and other healthcare workers need personal protective equipment in order to help curb the spread of the virus—equipment that we have been able to send as part of our long-established “Mobility Beyond Wheelchairs” program.

RESPONDING TO THE PANDEMIC

Free Wheelchair Mission is one of the only nonprofits dedicated to serving mobility disabilities that has responded to COVID-19 by sending medical supplies, earning coverage by media outlets such as CNN, *The New York Times*, and *Travel Noire Magazine*.

Through the “Mobility Beyond Wheelchairs” program, trusted distribution partners have received mobility aids, including wheelchairs, walkers, and canes, as well as medical supplies including surgical tools, masks, gloves, needles, syringes, and blankets. These medical supplies have been used by hospitals to perform corrective surgery on conditions such as clubfoot, but in the wake of the pandemic, they have become essential to distribution partners providing health care on the front lines. “Most of the medical supplies that came in the last emergency to protect the healthcare workers,” relayed a representative from FUSAL in El Salvador. “We are very thankful to you!”

Donations to our Medical and Mobility Emergency Fund not only help provide wheelchairs to those living with disabilities in developing nations, they also provide personal protective equipment and other medical supplies

COVID-19 GUIDELINES FOR WHEELCHAIR USERS

Download this printable document here: bit.ly/fwm-covidguide

COVID-19
Precautions for Wheelchair Users and Caregivers

FREE WHEELCHAIR MISSION

1 Wash your hands with soap and water, or an alcohol-based rub, for 20-30 seconds.

2 Wear a mask and keep at least 2 meters (6 feet) away from anyone coughing or sneezing.

3 Touch only the hand rims when using your wheelchair, and wash your hands and wrists afterwards.

These surfaces on your wheelchair require special attention when cleaning/disinfecting.

COVID-19 is a type of coronavirus that spreads easily through droplets from the nose or mouth of someone who has the virus. Common signs of the virus are fever, dry cough, and breathing problems, but not all people that carry COVID-19 show these signs.

You can help protect yourself and the people around you from the virus by following these tips:

- 1 Wash your hands:** Use soap and water or an alcohol-based rub for 20-30 seconds. Those who help you move around or get in/out of a wheelchair should also wash their hands before and afterwards.
- 2 Consider wearing a face mask:** If a medical mask is unavailable, use another fabric covering over your nose and mouth, making sure you can breathe comfortably.
- 3 Unique precautions for wheelchair users:**
 - A Avoid touching the tires:** Your tires can be contaminated by everything they touch, everywhere that you go.
 - B Keep your wheelchair clean.** Regularly wipe down the solid surfaces of your wheelchair with soap and water or with a disinfecting spray of bleach diluted in water. (Use two tablespoons of chlorine per one liter of water.)
 - C Pay special attention to tires, hand rims, push handles, brakes, and arm rests.** Be sure to grease the metal parts of your wheelchair to prevent rust.

Please consult your doctor or local health care professional for more information.

By doing these activities, we can slow the spread of the virus and promote a safer, healthier environment for you and your family.

References:
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www.beneficialdesigns.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/WC-AT-COVID-19-wash-gdms-2020-04-13-0815.pdf
www.todaysdesign.com

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

Wheelchair illustrations courtesy of Beneficial Designs.



DISABILITY ADVOCATE IN KENYA

Ester Njuguna (above) champions children like Muthoni (age 4, 2nd from left), who has cerebral palsy and needs a wheelchair.

to the health care workers who are serving them. To give to the emergency fund, visit freewheelchairmission.org/emergency.

THE EXPONENTIAL POWER OF GIVING

“It is quite tough,” said Miss Wheelchair Kenya 2019 Ester Njuguna on COVID-19. “Traveling, businesses, and the economy have dropped. It affects the disabled as well as others.” Ester uses her platform to advocate for others living with disabilities, knowing firsthand the difference a wheelchair can make. She received a wheelchair from our partner, BethanyKids, in 2017, completed a certificate in counseling, and is currently working towards a degree in psychology. Her desire is to help others.

Giving is contagious. Take Linh (40, Vietnam, photo on page 1), who contracted polio as an infant and cannot walk. Since her family could not afford to buy her a wheelchair, Linh was often left confined to her bed until she was 27, when she received her very first wheelchair from our local distribution partner, GIBTK. Several years later, a generous donor gave Linh three new sewing machines to start her own business.

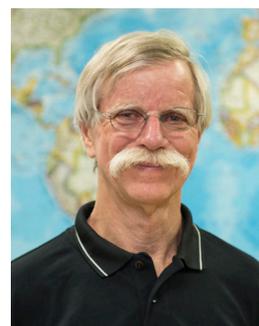
Today, Linh operates a successful tailoring business that trains and employs other people who live with disabilities. When COVID-19 struck Vietnam, Linh’s workshop began to produce face masks to donate to village children and those who live with disabilities. She also donated 200

masks to GIBTK, to help keep the staff healthy as they continue serving the community.

Ester’s and Linh’s stories demonstrate the exponential power of giving: Because of the generosity of friends like you, their lives have been transformed and they are now helping to transform the lives of others. They are making a difference in the next generation of individuals with disabilities. They are giving back to their communities, doing what they can to help others in the midst of this pandemic.

Generosity has the power to bring healing and unity to communities around the world, especially during times like these.

Now, more than ever, the needs are great, compelling us to press on with our mission—to provide the transforming gift of mobility to people living with disabilities in developing nations, as motivated by Jesus Christ. However, we cannot do this without your support. Would you consider giving a gift today? Thank you.



Blessings,

Don Schoendorfer, Ph.D.
Founder and President
Free Wheelchair Mission

THE SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL

MIRACLE OF MOBILITY *live*

Presented by Advisors Mortgage Group, LLC

On July 23, 2020 at 6:00PM PST/9:00PM EST, Free Wheelchair Mission will host our seventeenth annual event—this year, moving it online!

Miracle of Mobility Live is a one-of-a-kind, free, virtual gathering that benefits our work in providing wheelchairs and medical supplies to the communities we serve around the world.

Streaming on our website, Facebook, and other social sites, this inspiring evening features special guests, uplifting musical performances, entertaining ways to participate from home, and encouraging messages from wheelchair recipients and friends from around the world.

Special guests include Super Bowl MVP Nick Foles, Victoria Arlen, and four-time Grammy® award-winning duo, *for KING & COUNTRY*.

While this may be a challenging time, our mission continues. Those living with disabilities in developing nations need our support, now more than ever. Please join us and invite friends, in support of this special, virtual gathering!

To RSVP for free, visit freewheelchairmission.org/mom

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Please send checks to:

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