



MOBILIZE

We are thrilled to announce an exciting new way you can support those in need. Mobilize is our new recurring giving program that allows you to automatically give wheelchairs to people around the world, easily and efficiently.

With Mobilize, your monthly gifts help to lower our costs, making an even greater impact with each donation. Plus, with this new program, each month we will email you about where your gift went, with a specific story of transformation made possible by you!

For just \$32 per month, or about \$1 per day, you can provide four wheelchairs every year. For \$96 per month, you can transform someone's life every month with the gift of a new wheelchair.

When you join Mobilize, we'll send you a welcome packet and you'll also receive an our monthly email newsletter with amazing stories of transformation.

Join Mobilize today! www.Mobilize.love

Give Today to Transform Lives



FreeWheelchairMission.org/donate

Go online 24 hours a day for easy one-time or monthly giving.



Please send checks to:

Free Wheelchair Mission
15279 Alton Parkway
Suite 300
Irvine, California 92618



800.733.0858

Call Monday to Friday
9:00AM to 5:00PM PT

We Want to Hear From You! Connect With Us Online and Hear More Stories From the Field.



FreeWheelchairMission.org
Transforming lives through the gift of mobility®



HARD TIMES IN ARGENTINA

Over the last few months, Free Wheelchair Mission team members have been able to resume international travel for the first time since the pandemic began.

While I visited our distribution partner in Vietnam and our new factory in India, our CEO Nuka Solomon went to the Dominican Republic and Argentina, which might not be the first place that comes to mind when you think of developing countries. "It is assumed that Argentina is a thriving, wealthy nation," said Nuka, "but people outside of Argentina just don't realize how great the need for wheelchairs is here. Many have been waiting for years to receive one."

Argentina might have been wealthy a century ago, but today, the country is in its worst recession ever, with a poverty rate of 42%,¹ caused by years of inflation, recurring economic crises, rising debt, and the effects of the COVID pandemic. The unemployment rate for the general population hit 11.5% in 2020,² but for people with disabilities, that rate has been estimated to be well above 90%—even before the pandemic.

"Our distribution partner has noticed a significant increase in the need for wheelchairs since the start of the pandemic," Nuka told me, "so they're counting on us to do what we can to provide more."

¹<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.POV.NAHC?locations=AR>
²<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.ZS?locations=AR>

DONATE NOW

Provide the life-transforming gift of mobility and give someone renewed hope, freedom, and independence.
FreeWheelchairMission.org/donate



OUR WORK IN ARGENTINA

Argentina lies at the southeastern tip of South America, bordered by Chile on the west, Bolivia and Paraguay on the north, and Uruguay on the east, with around 2,900 miles of coastline stretching along the Atlantic. It is home to more than 46 million people.³

Here, approximately one out of every ten people lives with a disability, and more than a quarter of all households in Argentina have someone living with a disability. Of this population, an estimated 2.9 million individuals lack full mobility and many need wheelchairs.

Free Wheelchair Mission began to distribute wheelchairs in Argentina in 2009 through Centro de Integración Libre y Solidario de Argentina (CILSA), a non-governmental organization that was started by a group of people with mobility disabilities in 1966 to support the needs of the disability community. CILSA is now the only organization in Argentina outside of social services that provides assistive devices for free. These devices include our wheelchairs: to date, we have shipped 10,786 wheelchairs to CILSA for distribution in Argentina.

“I’M UNSTOPPABLE”

Victor (below, right; with Free Wheelchair Mission CEO Nuka Solomon) was overcome with emotion upon receiving “a nice, new” GEN_3 wheelchair.



CILSA’s network has a broad reach throughout the country, with their main areas of focus being the provinces of Buenos Aires, Santa Fe, and Salta. Nuka had a chance to participate in wheelchair distributions in these regions, along with our regional coordinator, Ilse Caballeros.

“GLIMPSES OF HOPE”

The province of Salta lies along the northernmost border of Argentina and is surrounded by mountains known as “the gate of the Andes.” In this remote region, CILSA has embarked on a campaign called “Farther Away, to Reach More.” More than 250 people with disabilities were registered on a waiting list for wheelchairs in Salta when Nuka and Ilse arrived with a team from CILSA. There, in an urban neighborhood, they brought a new wheelchair to a 46-year-old named Victor.

Victor had been born prematurely, which led to complications and the loss of his leg at birth. His parents and grandparents braced themselves for the possibility that he might not survive for more than a few days. But true to his name, little Victor would beat the odds, spending the next five years of his life at a children’s hospital, where he grew into an energetic child whom no one could keep up with, even though he would be crawling. It was at this hospital where Victor first met Victoria, a little girl who had undergone surgery and would someday become his wife.

His mother eventually came for him and took him home to his family, to a poor rural town where they had no water or electricity. At the age of seven, Victor resolved to go out and earn some money to help his mother and siblings. He would buy candy and sell it, starting his own small business. When his mother objected, he ran away from home.

Victor survived by sleeping at train stations, on the street, and at various orphanages, living off his meager earnings and the kindness of strangers. As a teenager, Victor connected with CILSA, which provided him with a prosthetic leg and introduced him to wheelchair sports. It was through wheelchair basketball that Victor reconnected with his childhood friend, Victoria, who played for another team. They fell in love,

³<https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/argentina/>



FARTHER AWAY, TO REACH MORE

As CILSA expands their reach throughout Argentina, Free Wheelchair Mission looks forward to shipping more containers of wheelchairs to meet the need there.

got married, and became active in the disability community, advocating for their rights and promoting wheelchair sports as a fun, safe way to find purpose. They went on to have three children and supported their family by making and selling handicrafts.

Victor had been using an old wheelchair that was on the verge of falling apart. Its seat was missing. He had to repair it so many times that he lost count. Then, Nuka and Ilse arrived at his home with the CILSA team and a new GEN_3 wheelchair for him.

“Thank you for my wheelchair,” said Victor. “It is a privilege, because I know there are so many others who also need one. Thank you for your work to provide for those you don’t even know.” Then Victor, a community leader who has always been fiercely independent, broke down in tears, overcome with emotion over the simple gift of a wheelchair. “You might not realize how important this is for someone who has a disability, like I do. I am so surprised. I cannot believe that I now have a nice, new wheelchair. I’m so happy and comfortable. I’m unstoppable.”

“In these difficult times that the world is in,” he continued, “people forget that there are organizations like yours that are focused on helping others who live in difficult circumstances and have lots of different needs. You bring us all glimpses of hope.”

MAKING A CONTINUED IMPACT

Free Wheelchair Mission is honored to partner

with CILSA in supporting those living with disabilities in Argentina. “The impact [of the wheelchair program] is always positive,” said a representative from CILSA, “thanks to these wheelchairs as a starting point to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities.”

“I was moved by the people we served, from the urban areas to the remote parts of the country, and was especially struck by their strong love of family, faith, and hope for a better future,” reflected Nuka on her recent visit to Argentina. “It is so rewarding to be able to share with our supporters that we are really making a difference in the country.”

The work that we do around the world, with organizations such as CILSA, all begins with you. It is because of your generosity that we have distributed more than 1.3 million wheelchairs across 94 countries since 2001. “Congratulations on your work, for the hope you bring to all of us,” offered Victor. “May God bless you.”

Would you consider giving the gift of a wheelchair to help make someone like Victor “unstoppable”?



Blessings,

Don Schoendorfer

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