



x2 GIFT CHALLENGE

Double your impact with our x2 Gift Challenge this March!

When you give during our x2 Gift Challenge, you will be helping twice as many people to receive the gift of mobility! From March 1-31, your gifts of any size will be doubled thanks to the gracious support of a group of generous donors.

That means that your gift of \$192 will now provide four individuals with the gift of mobility rather than just two, and your gift of \$384 will now provide eight individuals with the gift of mobility rather than four.

Our goal during this x2 Gift Challenge is to transform the lives of 21,000 individuals with the gift of a wheelchair. This is an ambitious goal that we can only achieve with your prayers and support.

Thank you for coming alongside us on this journey of lifting 21,000 individuals into wheelchairs this March.

For more information or to donate, visit:
FreeWheelchairMission.org/x2

FREE WHEELCHAIR MISSION

WINTER 2024 UPDATE



Give Today to Transform Lives



FreeWheelchairMission.org/donate

Access 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
9:00 AM to 5:00 PM PT

We want to hear from you! Connect with us online and hear more stories from the field.



@FreeWheelchairMission



@FWMission



FreeWheelchairMission.org/stories

LIFTED OUT OF DESPAIR

Neysi is a 34-year-old single mother of three young children, ages 5, 8, and 11. They live in a remote, indigenous region on the northeastern coast of Nicaragua.

Living on limited means, Neysi would always put her children first, giving them most of any food that came their way. Consequently, she has grown emaciated and weak over the years, developing circulatory issues, diabetes, and excruciating leg pain that have left her unable to walk. Without mobility, Neysi could not leave the house to earn a living or seek needed medical care, which only worsened her condition. The young mother would often crumple to the floor in tears, overcome with despair, feeling helpless while her three kids took responsibility for most of the household chores.

It was easy for Neysi to feel alone and unseen, hidden away in an isolated part of the world. Eastern Nicaragua can be challenging to access, hemmed in between dense, tropical rainforests to the west and the Caribbean Sea to the east. The region's already-fragile infrastructure was battered by Hurricanes Eta and Iota in 2020, which caused extensive damage to roads, bridges, schools, and healthcare facilities.

To someone like Neysi, having a wheelchair seemed like a distant dream—but that dream would soon come true thanks to partners and supporters like you.

DONATE NOW

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

FreeWheelchairMission.org/donate



FreeWheelchairMission.org

Transforming lives through the gift of mobility®

ACCESSING THE ISOLATED

Nicaragua is located in Central America, bordered by Honduras and Costa Rica (see map on next page). Its rugged landscape spans from the Pacific to the Atlantic, punctuated by active volcanoes, lakes, and thick rainforests. The climate influences agriculture and shapes local livelihoods, much of which center around farming and fishing.

Most of Nicaragua's 6.5 million people live in the western part of the country, where much of its urban growth can be found. The eastern part is far less developed, with notable disparities in the availability of paved roads, electricity, water, and other basic services. Overall, Nicaragua is the least-developed country in Central America and the second poorest country in the Western Hemisphere.

Limited access to health services has contributed significantly to Nicaragua's disability rate. According to the Nicaragua Ministry of Health, the leading causes of disability are problems at birth, disease, and accidents.¹ Approximately one out of every seven people in Nicaragua lives with a disability,² and these households are 45% more likely to be in poverty than households without someone living with disability.³ In Nicaragua, as in many developing countries around the world, poverty and disability are intertwined, feeding one another in a vicious cycle as it does with Neysi.

“A BLESSING FOR MY FAMILY”

With mobility, Neysi is no longer as dependent on her children for help.



To address this need, Free Wheelchair Mission has distributed nearly 42,000 wheelchairs to the people of Nicaragua since 2006, through distribution partners including Christian Aid Ministries and Metanoia Missions. These local organizations have demonstrated what great lengths they will go to in order to bring mobility to those in need: over the years, they have deployed their networks to deliver wheelchairs by means ranging from driving pickup trucks along winding, unpaved roads to transporting wheelchairs across the water in motorboats; from manually hauling wagons loaded with wheelchairs across muddy fields to carrying individual wheelchairs uphill and upstairs on one's shoulders. There have even been instances where wheelchairs were carried through the countryside on the backs of donkeys. Neither distance nor geographic challenges have deterred our network from serving those in need.

A trip to deliver wheelchairs to Bilwi in eastern Nicaragua, where Neysi lives, could take the better part of a day each way, but the journey is worth it. “Anytime someone is given the gift of mobility, it helps them to feel more included and valued,” said Arvin Eby of Christian Aid Ministries. “[Wheelchairs] have made a life-saving difference in the lives of many recipients.”

NEW HOPE FOR NEYSI

Amidst Neysi's growing sense of despair, an unexpected glimmer of hope emerged when our distribution team arrived at her house with a new GEN_3 wheelchair. Her children and neighbors watched eagerly as she was lifted into the chair and adjustments were made to ensure a proper fit. Neysi's appearance changed almost instantaneously as her furrowed brow and anguished glare gave way to a lightness and joy that she had not felt in years. Neysi was then trained by our distribution partner, who was trained by Free Wheelchair Mission, on wheelchair maintenance and wheelchair exercises to prevent pressure sores.

¹ *Country Profile—Nicaragua*. Pan American Health Organization. (2003, March). https://www3.paho.org/english/dd/ais/be_v24n1-nicaragua.htm

² *Including children with disabilities in Nicaragua's schools improves education for all*. UNOSSC. (2022, November 21). <https://unsouthsouth.org/2022/11/21/including-children-with-disabilities-in-nicaraguas-schools-improves-education-for-all>

³ *Disability Inclusion in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Path to Sustainable Development*. World Bank Group. (2021, October). <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstreams/69530056-5a07-504d-b37f-465b645a5f5c/download>



OVER LAND AND SEA

Our distribution network delivers wheelchairs to those in need throughout Nicaragua, using everything from donkeys to motorboats.

Several days after giving Neysi a wheelchair, our team was encouraged by a surprising sight: Neysi in her new wheelchair, miles from home, being pushed along the road by her eight-year-old daughter to get needed medication from a government clinic. The wheelchair had gifted them the priceless ability to move, opening doors they once deemed closed. Furthermore, the money saved on public transportation could be used instead to buy food for the family.

Slowly but surely, Neysi began to recover. Several months after receiving her wheelchair, she reported that she has been regaining strength and even hopes to be able to walk again. “I am very grateful for the blessings that donors have shared with me,” gleamed Neysi. “This wheelchair has been a blessing for my family.”

“Every wheelchair means a new way of living,” stated Moises Arauz of Metanoia Missions. “We are bringing hope in the midst of a critical moment [in Nicaragua]. We have the privilege of providing people with the gift of mobility, an ongoing transformation for their lives, families, and society. We feel honored to serve God and his people through the wheelchair program.”



We also feel honored to be part of this work. When we give someone a wheelchair, we want them to know that God sees them, even when they might feel like nobody else around them sees. This is why our network is willing to go to the lengths we do to deliver wheelchairs in places like Nicaragua and other developing countries, where the need for mobility remains strong.

But all of this starts with you. This work could not be accomplished without your ongoing prayers and support. We are grateful for your partnership with us in transforming lives through the gift of mobility.

Blessings,



Don Schoendorfer

Don Schoendorfer
President and Founder
Free Wheelchair Mission