

ANNOUNCING

GEN 4 JOY™



A NEW GENERATION OF MOBILITY

At Free Wheelchair Mission, innovation is more than a core value—it's the heartbeat of our mission. It began in 2001 when our founder, Don Schoendorfer, saw the need for mobility in developing countries and designed the GEN 1 wheelchair in response. With its iconic, durable, white resin chair and mountain bike tires that can easily be repaired or replaced in almost any country, GEN 1 brought mobility to those who had gone without, offering them **renewed dignity**.

In 2009, GEN 2 took that vision further. Designed in multiple sizes, it allowed for a more customized fit, giving recipients a wheelchair that felt more personal, more comfortable, and more empowering. This advancement provided a greater sense of **independence**.

When we saw the need to transport wheelchairs onto crowded public buses and through narrow doorways, we launched the foldable GEN 3 in 2013. With greater ease of transport came greater **freedom**, opening new possibilities for daily life, work, and community involvement.

Now, in 2025, we are proud to introduce the latest innovation in our ongoing commitment to mobility: **GEN 4 JOY**.

LEARN MORE

FreeWheelchairMission.org/GEN4JOY

Watch
Video



LAYING THE FOUNDATION

Our mission began when our founder listened to a sense of calling from God, and that posture of listening continues: to our partners in the field and to those who use our wheelchairs. GEN 4 JOY is more than a product of innovation—it is the result of listening.

To bring this vision to life, we welcomed Keith Herr as our new Director of Manufacturing, working alongside Mechanical Engineer Bonnie Gonzalez. Together, they bring fresh creativity and technical expertise, building on the strong foundation laid by our founder, Don Schoendorfer. We also partnered with seasoned professionals from the wheelchair industry whose decades of experience have strengthened our processes and raised our standards. This expanded team has embraced bold ideas and a spirit of innovation to drive the next chapter forward.

The creation of GEN 4 JOY was made possible by the generosity of the Thompson Family Foundation, whose support for research and innovation allowed us to retool manufacturing operations while expanding global distribution of our existing models. Additionally, a six-year partnership with Invacare—one of the world's leading wheelchair manufacturers—has played a critical role in the development of GEN 4 JOY. Their donated time, technical expertise, and specialized testing equipment were invaluable in ensuring durability and performance.

The result is a wheelchair that will make an even greater impact on the communities we serve.

DESIGNED WITH PURPOSE

Our engineers drew on decades of experience to create the highly adjustable GEN 4 JOY.



DESIGNED FOR LASTING IMPACT

GEN 4 JOY represents a significant step forward in mobility design, shaped by the voices of wheelchair users and the expertise of our engineering team. Every update and design decision was made with purpose.

First, we added two additional sizes: XS (extra-small) to XXL (extra-extra-large). With a total of six sizes, GEN 4 JOY can serve a wider range of individuals, from young children to adults weighing up to 275 pounds.

Comfort and usability were major focuses. GEN 4 JOY offers more ways to adjust and customize the fit for each individual, with updated seating, wider armrests, and adjustable footrests that provide better posture, circulation, and stability. For caregivers, added push handles and curb levers make it easier to navigate rough terrain, while repositioned wheels improve self-propelling for users.

The folding frame, quick-release wheels, and slimmer width make transportation and storage simpler, especially for families who rely on public transit. The narrower design also allows users to access tight spaces like bathrooms and showers, offering new levels of dignity and independence. In addition, the updated frame fits more compactly into smaller boxes, allowing more units to be shipped in each container.

Durability has also been significantly improved. A rust-resistant aluminum frame and simplified, reinforced structure help GEN 4 JOY withstand long-term use—early testing suggests it may last twice as long as earlier models. New manufacturing techniques support this longevity by improving quality and consistency across every unit, while also increasing production efficiency.

Together, these advancements allow us to deliver more wheelchairs, more quickly, to those who need them most.

TAKING HIS “FIRST STEPS”

In May and June, we sent teams to Thailand, Guatemala, and Argentina to test and receive our first GEN 4 JOY wheelchairs. Among them was one of our new XS models, carefully packed in a van and destined for a young boy living in the outskirts of Buenos Aires, Argentina. The road was dusty and unpaved, winding past modest brick houses and open fields.

As the van pulled up to one house, our team was greeted by a mother and grandmother, who



EMPOWERING MORE LIVES
GEN 4 JOY was designed to serve a wider range of users, including young users like Gabriel.

welcomed them inside. There, they found a shy, nearly-three-year-old named Gabriel (photos above) sitting in the corner, covering his face to hide from strangers. He had been born with a severe form of spina bifida that affected his spine and nervous system, resulting in paralysis of his lower limbs.

Gabriel had been using an old, ill-fitting wheelchair that wasn't designed for self-propulsion. He couldn't safely reach the wheels, often risking pinching his fingers when he tried, and had to rely on others to move him. On his mother's limited income selling baked goods out of their home, a new, more suitable wheelchair had always been out of reach.

That changed with GEN 4 JOY. The properly fitted, adjustable wheelchair gave Gabriel the comfort, support, and freedom he needed. For the first time, he was able to move by himself—sit at a desk, paint with his brother, and engage with other children at eye level. GEN 4 JOY also provided the body alignment essential to his physical development and growing independence.

Within minutes, Gabriel was propelling himself forward, the wheels responding easily to his hands. He didn't need anyone to push him anymore. His mother and grandmother held back tears, as if witnessing his first steps.

Then came a moment no one would forget: Gabriel rolled across the room, unprompted, and reached his mother on his own for the very first time. He gave her a big hug and a kiss on the cheek.

It was a moment of pure beauty, emotion—and joy.

LOOKING AHEAD

GEN 4 JOY is a reflection of what's possible when compassion meets innovation. Every design decision was made with care, shaped by our calling to serve and improve the lives of individuals like Gabriel and the estimated 80 million people still waiting for mobility.

"The population of people needing wheelchairs is increasing, especially the population requiring basic mobility assistance, which is exactly what this wheelchair provides," said Joey Tell of RICD, our distribution partner in Thailand. "Extremely useful at meeting the needs of the disability community at large...The longevity of this chair is far superior to any other chair that I am aware of in the sub-\$250 range."

As we look ahead, we are filled with gratitude for our partners, supporters, and friends like you who make this work possible. Your prayers and generosity fuel this mission, bringing renewed dignity, independence, freedom, and joy to a whole new generation.

Thank you for being part of this journey with us.

With gratitude,



Nuka Hart

Chief Executive Officer
Free Wheelchair Mission



Event Host

Candace Cameron Bure
(Orange County and Virtual events)



Performance by
for KING + COUNTRY
(Virtual event)

MIRACLE OF MOBILITY

Orange County, CA • September 4, 2025

Virtual • September 21, 2025

Seattle, WA • October 11, 2025

You are joyfully invited to the 2025 Miracle of Mobility!

Join us for an inspiring in-person and virtual experience in support of Free Wheelchair Mission’s life-changing work—bringing the gift of mobility to individuals living with disabilities in developing countries.

This unforgettable event will feature:

- Special guests, including returning host **Candace Cameron Bure** (at both the Orange County and Virtual events)
- A powerful musical performance by **for KING + COUNTRY** (Virtual event only)
- Heartfelt stories from wheelchair recipients around the world
- Fun ways to engage—and a few surprises along the way!

Help us **transform 24,000 lives** through the gift of mobility.

To RSVP and learn more about both the in-person and virtual experiences, visit MiracleofMobility.org.

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

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