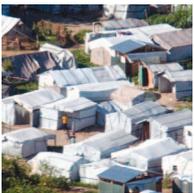


vital link

Transforming lives through disabled people



Congratulations Jenny!



Hope in Haiti



An Unforgettable Winter



Two Weeks for TTR

Mary's Story

The Wheels distribution to Ghana (November 2011) had a difficult start, with a heavily delayed container meaning the team had to do eight days of distribution in just three days. They used their time amazingly, speaking to over 5,000 people at a convention and making early assessments to allow for the quickest possible fittings. The final days were long, 14 or 15 hours of fitting, but all the chairs were distributed, and the team saw 270 clients. This is just one lady's story, told by first time team member, Melanie White...

Whilst we were waiting for the container, a gentleman called Stanley told us about a nearby village for cured lepers. He invited us to assess several people there he'd identified as needing mobility aids. We assessed eight people, but one lady – Mary – stuck in my mind.

Mary had been cured of leprosy, which had damaged her hands and feet, but also had extremely swollen legs, preventing her from moving. Owing to lack of mobility she had a sacral sore. She'd been stuck in bed for two years. She wore a blue bin liner stuffed with rags as an incontinence pad. She was

soaked in urine. Stanley told us that he gave Mary 'nappies'. One per day.

We knew this lady would need a special wheelchair, with an extra wide seat, elevating leg rests and a wide pressure cushion to fit. We couldn't promise anything – only pray there'd be a suitable chair when the container arrived.

When it did, the widest chair didn't look wide enough. But it did fit her other needs. We knew we wouldn't be able to return to the village until the last day. We didn't know if there'd be anybody else who needed this chair more than Mary, or if she'd even be able to sit in this one. Friday arrived and the wheelchair was still available, so we asked Stanley to take us to Mary.

Mary had a huge smile on her face as two men from the village lifted her into her new chair. For the first time in two years she left her bed.

Whilst Will secured and adjusted the chair, Mary pointed to a pile of black bin liners sitting in a corner of her room. We passed her a bag, and she rummaged through, pulling out a white shirt. We helped her put it on. She rummaged more and pulled out a skirt. We placed it over her legs and tucked it down the side. Mary was ready to see the sunlight. We pushed her out on to the veranda and she sat proudly next to her neighbour. For me, in particular, this made the trip worthwhile.



Parachute Bible Stories at the Hand in Hand conference



Philippa and Alan run the stand

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Our Vision

'... is of a world where all people live interdependently, mutually giving and receiving as God intended.'

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Integr8 on the Road Again!

by Alan Whetherly, Integr8 Programme Manager

It has been a very busy and productive time for the Integr8 team. While some members travelled to Moldova, Philippa and I made the – less epic, but still important - trip to Eastbourne to exhibit for the first time at the 'Hand in Hand' Children and Families Ministry conference. We were there to raise awareness of the Integr8 programme by exhibiting and by showcasing our new Parachute Bible Stories at a seminar.

We prayed that God would bring the right people to our stand and that he would bless us to deliver a fun and inclusive workshop. Philippa and I were joined by Alice Langtree, one of our trustees, who had previous experience of the conference, and she was able to help us make the most of our time there.

We produced a new Integr8 postcard which provides people with our aims and how we can help them be inclusive. These cards were well received and a great way of promoting Integr8.

We also told people about our new project, Integr8 Encounter Groups, which addresses the issue of families with disabled children

experiencing isolation. Encounter Groups enable young people with and without disabilities to join together in an inclusive, Christ-centred community. The core values of the groups are courage, determination, inspiration, equality and relationship. We were able to talk to people about this new initiative, and were encouraged that we had several expressions of interest. We pray that God will direct us to the right people to begin the project.

One of our highlights of the weekend was God bringing over 60 people to our seminar on the new Parachute Bible Story resource. There was real excitement in the large room. It was good that we'd brought three parachutes so that everyone was able to participate. We explained how this new resource can offer a really inclusive and multi-sensory approach for young people to learn about the Bible and how much God loves us. Everyone participated in two Bible stories: Noah's Ark, and the Through the Roof story. You can download four of the bible story resources from our website for free. Visit <http://youth.throughtheroof.org> to read them.

Our Prayer Diary

Through the Roof produces a quarterly diary of prayer pointers. It lists events, talks, workshops, holidays and just about anything else we're up to. If you'd like to receive a copy (the current one runs from February to April, and the next will be from May to July), please get in touch with the office.

We also send out a weekly prayer and praise e-mail – please contact us if you'd like to receive that. Thank you for all of your prayers!

Quiet Day



Following on from the success of last year's Quiet Day, we have been silently contemplating a sequel. We're looking to run either a one-day Quiet Day, or a two-day Retreat in August, most likely in Hinwick College, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire. Dates and details are still being confirmed, but please contact us on **01372 749955** if you'd like to register an interest or find out more.

New Supporters Pipe Up



Flowstore's own design of coin collector



We are excited to announce that Flowstore Systems Ltd (www.flowstore.co.uk) are helping to support our Wheels for the World programme. Staff at Flowstore have already responded to the need for wheelchairs in Africa, creating a coin-collecting device from their own pipework, and hosting a number of fundraising events, as well as some generous donations from the company.

The most recent event was a sponsored 5-a-side football match, organised by employees Ibbly Hussain and Wayne Verrill. Using the Goals Soccer Centre in Shepiston Lane, Flowstore held a mini 5-a-side football tournament on Saturday 28 Jan, with staff taking part to raise money for the charity. The Flowstore factory team won the tournament trophy 16-13 on total goals scored, and Wayne

collected the Golden Boot award for top scorer with 8 goals. The match raised £240 for Wheels, sponsoring 6 wheelchairs.

Managing Director Simon Dennis said, "I'm delighted that our whole staff seems to have got behind this very practical charity work, which is now part of our company's Social Responsibility policy. We've been an employer in Hayes since 1984, and it's great to see individuals putting themselves out to help others at a time when the business world faces criticism for selfishness. Although we've only been partnering with Wheels for a few months, we've already exceeded our original 12 month target for sponsored chairs!"

We hope this is the beginning of a long and successful working relationship. Thank you to all the team at Flowstore!



(l-r) Anne, Jenny and Bridget at Windsor Castle

Congratulations Jenny!

Jenny Edwards, coordinator of the Disabled Christians Fellowship programme, has been awarded an MBE in the Queen's New Year Honours. Jenny was honoured for her years of service to disabled people, particularly in Surrey, though her work has taken her all around the country.

Jenny joined Disabled Christians Fellowship in 1978 as a volunteer - moving from Bristol to Thames Ditton when the charity joined Through the Roof. Before contracting meningitis in 1976, which left her paraplegic, Jenny was a state registered children's nurse. She currently works as the

coordinator for DCF, supporting and creating groups that provide fellowship for disabled people, organising holidays and nurturing and developing individuals.

Jenny has received many congratulations from old colleagues, friends, contacts and clients from throughout the years, with people saying that "it's really exciting, perhaps one way God would like to show you his recognition and appreciation of all you have given out during your lifetime", that it is "so well deserved, for all (your) hard work and dedication" and thanking her for her years of support and giving. All of us at TTR are thrilled that she's been honoured like this – Congratulations!

DCF Holidays

Guests on the Blackpool holiday



Now that the snow has gone and summer is on the way, it's time to book your holiday with Disabled Christians Fellowship. We offer two UK holidays, Babbacombe (28 July to 4 August) and Blackpool (10 to 17 September), with care included. For more information ring **01372 749955**, places are limited so don't leave applying too long!

Medals that Last Forever



by **Tim Wood, CEO**

"Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever." 1 Corinthians 9:25

4,000 disabled athletes will descend on London for the Paralympic Games, competing to attain a prize that won't last. Medals lose their shine and value – some members of England's 1966 World Cup winning football team even sold theirs! In contrast, all who follow Jesus Christ receive a medal or crown that lasts forever. Regardless of ability, each of us has an incredible invitation to experience a full life with God – eternal life – starting here. I received an e-mail demonstrating this from an Integr8 volunteer, Kerry. Her sister, Kirsty had a progressive, disabling condition but lived a full life. I never met Kirsty, yet she had an impact on me, people around her and even the Integr8 team who used Kirsty's life experiences to inspire many in Uganda.

Here, Kerry shares some of her story...

"Kirsty's health has been rapidly deteriorating this past year and she is facing most people's worst nightmare. She remains totally lucid and aware whilst her body starts to shut down around her. You might wonder where God is in all of this? But God has been with Kirsty throughout her illness, and His grace is especially evident in her moments of greatest need. And now that she is physically at her lowest ebb, the light of Christ blazes in her spirit with such intensity that it has transformed my faith by showing me how much more there is to God that I have yet to taste.

Kirsty passed on from this earth at 3:13am on Monday 23rd January. There was an incredible peace and sense of God's presence in the room. My main feeling in that moment was genuine joy over the gift of Kirsty's life and that she is now free in Heaven. I know that is exactly what Kirsty wanted, and I'm amazed that her death turned out to be such a strangely joyful experience."

I encourage you all to focus, like Kirsty, on the right prize.



From the Chairman

by **Mike Townsend**

What do you think about change? Some of us get excited and enthusiastic. For many it is a challenge. Trusting Jesus was the very biggest change in my life. It was transformational! Transformation is one of Through the Roof's values. It is an ongoing experience hand in hand with Jesus.

The Through the Roof Board is undergoing change at the moment. We are saying farewell to two trustees: David Dawson has been a stalwart Vice-Chair giving personal support to us all and especially the team in Surrey through some very difficult times in his life. He always seems to be on a yacht when I talk with him. We wish him well as he sails in to a fresh future.

John Naudé, with his family, is moving to serve God in Malawi. We pray this will be a fruitful change.

Thank you to both David and John for all your dedication and input.

We welcome Clyde Bacchus as a new trustee.

The trustees will be meeting together on retreat on March 28th with Tim Wood to seek God's plan for the next stage of TTR. Please pray at this transformational time. This *is* exciting with Jesus!



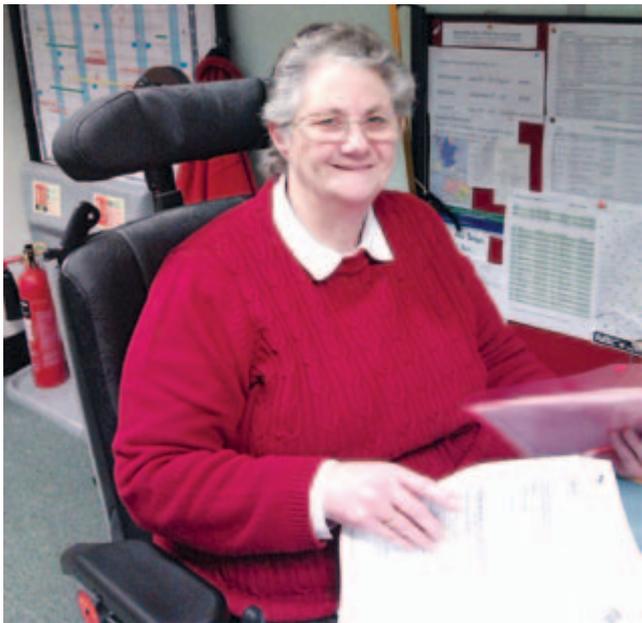
Dear Roof-breaking friends...

From **Joni Eareckson Tada**

I love it whenever a fellow wheelchair-user receives special recognition. That's why I'm happy to congratulate our own Jenny Edwards. Jenny recently received the highly prestigious award of an MBE in the Queen's New Year Honours list – congratulations, friend!

And that's not all I'm excited about. Here we are into 2012 and Through the Roof is already charging ahead with exciting ministry this winter. Whether it's helping churches prepare for evangelism outreach during this year's Paralympic Games, or providing wheelchairs to needy people with disabilities in developing nations, the Through the Roof team is moving full-steam forward...

And we are so grateful that you are a part of the team! With your prayers and gifts, you are helping to take the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those who need Him most – and that is people with disabilities and their families. Believe me, "this service that you perform is overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God" (II Corinthians 9:12). It's going to be a great year, friend – and we praise God that He is in the lead!



Super SatNav

by **Jenny Edwards, MBE**

I wonder how many of you have a Satellite Navigation Device or know of someone who does? I have and find that most of the time it takes away the stress of trying to track down wherever I am going. However, there are times when I wish it would not take me down little winding lanes as a short cut to the main road! The other evening it was dark and I was directed down just such a dark narrow unknown twisty road. So were some other cars, and the inevitable happened – cars came in the opposite direction and the road was not wide enough to pass. Someone either had to back up or give way to allow another to pass. It was a scary moment, but all was well eventually and I made it to the main road.

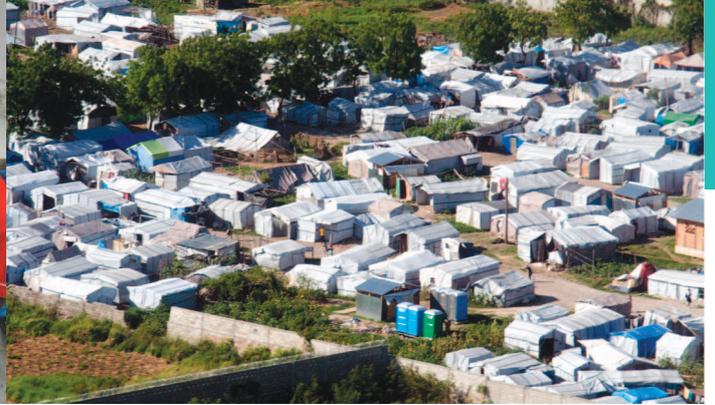
This reminded me of when God was speaking to Joshua after Moses had died and Joshua took over leadership. God tells him NOT to divert his path either left or right, but to keep within His guidance and instruction. Far easier said than done, but had I kept on the road ahead and met the main road that way, I would not have had the unnerving experience I did in that narrow lane! Personally I think God is an amazing Sat-Nav, follow His guidance and we cannot go wrong.



50 Years of History

Jenny has written a short book telling the story of the first fifty years of DCF. It'll be of interest to everyone involved with DCF, as well as anyone looking for an inspirational read! Please get in touch to get a copy – they're 50p for DCF groups, and £2 for anyone else.

Derek shows trainees how to fit the chairs



Hard Ground But Hope in Haiti

"Haiti is one of the hardest places to work in the world. You will be frustrated and (should) not expect things to change quickly." The sentiments of Haiti Hospital Appeal (HHA) – have been confirmed by Through the Roof's experience to date.

It is now two years since the earthquake tragically hit Haiti with the loss of several thousand lives. Through the Roof was fortunate to raise a substantial amount of money for our Wheels for the World programme, to assist in providing mobility to those in Haiti. We initially conducted a recce to identify the needs with Medical Teams International of Les Cayes. Although a second visit took place to train and mentor personnel, progress dwindled and further plans were thwarted... until now.

God seems now to be opening a door and has brought us together with Haiti Hospital Appeal (HHA). HHA (www.haitihospitalappeal.org) is a Christian charity with a heart of compassion and a desire for justice. Founded by a Baptist pastor and his wife from Kent, their heart is to empower Haitian medics to create a sustainable and accessible health service. Working in Cap Haitien, northern Haiti, since 2006, they were well placed to help those injured by the earthquake. They now have a rehabilitation hospital for 26 spinal patients injured in the quake and also support disabled children and their families. Our meeting with HHA was very productive – their need includes all-terrain wheelchairs, input from specialist personnel, and they dream of having a workshop – all of which we can offer! The cost of shipping our own chairs would be prohibitive so we will look to co-ordinate with Motivation to supply their chairs in flat packs. We are confident God has opened this door for us to go through so your prayers are welcomed.

The Sharon Award

Linda (on the left) receives the Sharon award from Jenny



On January 14th twenty members of DCF travelled to Emsworth, Hants for a memorable presentation lunch. The Sharon Award was created in memory of Sharon Key, a very special DCF member, who passed away three years ago. Every year since, we have presented an award (in the shape of a crystal key) to someone who displays the same qualities as Sharon.

This year the award went to Linda Titheridge, and she was invited to join a group of us for lunch, quite unaware that she had been given this surprise

award and that the lunch was in her honour! There was much chatter and singing as well as laughter for the time we were all together, with many memories of holidays together being shared amongst all present. Congratulations Linda from all at Through the Roof.

Donations Update



A massive thank you to everyone for your generous donations – we couldn't continue our work without your support. Through the Roof aims to thank every donor, but sometimes we're unable to contact our anonymous supporters. Here's a list of all those we haven't been able to reach – thank you all. Anonymous donation to Wheels £5 (x2); Anonymous donation (general) £10; Anon CAF donation (general)

£20 + £100; CAF Voucher donation (general) £110; Unable to thank Mrs HM Humphreys for £15 donation for Wheels; anon CAF Voucher (general) £250; M Bennett £16 donation Wheels; anonymous donation (general) of £10 via Just Giving; CAF Voucher anonymous donation (general) £100; anon CAF voucher (general) £50; legacies from Gladys Hill and Winifred Hillier; Mr Minas Hajimina £50 donation (general).

An Unforgettable Winter

Integr8 changing lives in Moldova, by Tim Wood



Our hosts, the Chirica family (l-r back) Petru, David, Doina, Emanuela, (l-r front) Antonina, Petru-Marius, Catea

"You will never forget this winter, all the days of your life," laughed Doina, as our minibus sped (and sometimes slid) along snow-covered roads in temperatures of minus 15. Doina is the daughter of our Moldovan partners, Pastor Petru Chirica (who first connected with Through the Roof at our 2006 European conference in Bognor) and his wife, Antonina, of the Moldova Charity Mission for the Disabled (MCM).

Conditions like these would have brought the UK to a standstill, but it was business as usual for our hosts, the Chirica family. Despite illness forcing team-member Ian to withdraw at the last moment, the intrepid team (wearing five layers of clothing each!) ploughed through one foot of snow to train pastors, teachers and community workers to include disabled people in Moldova, Europe's poorest (and coldest?) country.

We were also privileged to visit Gabi, Katjie and Anatol, three disabled young people, all full of life and potential, yet stuck at home, due not to the weather, but because typical Moldovan attitudes means there are no education, social or work opportunities for disabled people. These children's example and MCM's valuable support and input in their lives made us more determined to 'speak up...defend the rights of the poor and needy' (Proverbs 31:9) and highlight the value of disabled people.

The team's talents included assessing the needs of disabled people; communication methods to engage with disabled children; strategies to enable independence; and personal experience of living with disability, and we inspired and encouraged many. Attendees commented that they would adopt these ideas and help change lives and work for the long-term building of a more inclusive society.

Doina was right – I will never forget this icy experience, nor will any of us forget the waste of young disabled lives shut away from society. Our Integr8 programme will carry on doing everything possible to bring young disabled people into the light and be included in church and community life.



The team (l-r) Michele, Lena, Rach, Zoe, Tim

In Memory of David Akers

David Akers passed away on Saturday 26th November 2011 (at the age of 66).

David will be fondly remembered by many readers, as he was for many years an invited speaker at the DCF holidays at Ullenwood Manor in the Cotswolds. Many will recall his great sense of humour on these occasions, especially taking part in comedy sketches in the evenings. David was the leader of the Little Stoke branch of the DCF during the 1980s and gave kindly advice, being a great encourager in the faith.

A service of thanksgiving was held at Thornbury Baptist Church on 15th December. The service was led by the Rev. Neil Mobbs, a great friend of David's. The congregation sang some of David's favourite hymns including Blessed Assurance and Thine Be The Glory. We thank the Lord for the fellowship and friendship that we all shared in David.



Two Weeks for TTR

A fortnight for raising awareness and funds - 14th to 28th August

The fundraising Flowstore football team show off their Wheels shirts

A very special fortnight is on the way. We're hoping that all our supporters will get involved, setting up events, sponsorships and occasions to tell more people about the work of Through the Roof.

We've planned it for the two weeks leading up to the Paralympics – a great opportunity to raise the profile of disability – but you can give as little as an hour or even more than the full two weeks. You could even choose a totally different date if it works for you. We're hoping you'll be inspired by the summer's sporting events to try something new, fun and challenging.

People are already plotting a summer garden party, a special restaurant evening, a karaoke night and a supermarket coin collection. Lots of other projects are in the works. There will be recognition for the most creative idea (group or individual) as judged by Karen, our Volunteer Community Fundraiser. Obviously, everyone's summer will be different, but here are a few suggestions...

Away on holiday? We're certainly not asking you to hold a sponsored sunbathe, but why not tell at least three people that you meet about our work?

At work? Put up a small display (we can send you posters and leaflets), send an awareness-raising email, hold a lunchtime sale (food usually works well – especially cakes and biscuits!), do a sponsored event...

At home? Host a garden party, take part in a car boot sale, hold a quiz for friends (we can provide you with fun question sheets), make and sell jam and chutney... Make sure everyone you contact knows what they're supporting!

At church? Give away your Vital Link, and encourage others to sign up.

We'd love to hear what you're planning to do. Let us know what you're up to, when you're going to do it, and whether you'd like it publicised on our website and/or on Facebook. Please also get in touch if you'd like us to send you some materials, including leaflets and Vital Links.

As well as our Vital Link readers, we're encouraging all staff, volunteers and Board of Trustees to take part - if everyone on our database raises just £1.50 we'd exceed our target of £5000!

Through the Roof's work is made possible by donations. We hope you enjoyed this issue, and all the stories of lives transformed by your generous work, prayer and support. Thank you.



Promoting Wheels at the Ashted Garden Party

In Memory of Paul Hardy by Glenda Pike

Paul Hardy, who passed away in January, aged 61, was a great supporter of Wheels for the World over the past 14 years. He went out on two wheelchair distributions – to Albania and Ukraine. He was someone who worked hard in the background, keeping a low profile, but his skilled work was always appreciated.

Paul helped in the barn preparing wheelchairs for container loadings and then when we loaded he was always in the container stacking chairs etc. John Aves and Paul would go

off in a U Drive van to Dorchester, Epsom and various other places when wheelchairs needed collecting. I think they quite enjoyed their little jollies as white van men – or UDrive men.

Paul seemed to have boundless energy, was totally reliable, usually quiet but he enjoyed the banter. We have really missed him this past year but we are thankful to God for Paul's help and support, it has been a privilege to know and work with him.