

vital link

Transforming lives through disabled people



A Special Blessing

Wheels for the World Fits Our 8000th Wheelchair

Our Wheels for the World team have just returned from a sensational distribution in Mukono, Uganda, where they worked with 286 people, including one girl called Blessing, the happy recipient of the 8000th chair given away by Wheels.

Blessing is 12 years old, and attends a special school near Mukono, which took her in after her parents died. She was born with deformed legs, and is both deaf and unable to speak, she uses sign language to communicate. Until now, she's crawled on her knees to get around, something that the team saw a lot of in Mukono, an area where there is still a great need for mobility aids and support, but now she has the chair, she'll be able to join in with many more of her school's activities.

Wheels has been refurbishing and distributing chairs for 16 years, and each individual chair makes a huge change to many lives. Linda Head, Wheels team member, 'was newly struck by how life-transforming the work of Wheels is. Not just giving people mobility aids, but how these items impact and improve the lives of the recipient's family. By working with local charities like RILD, we are able to help people access local help for other areas of their lives, and the therapists are able to serve families by offering advice, encouragement and education during the fitting process.'

Nigel Drury, our International Missions Manager was team leader for this distribution, and reported that it all went well, 'two

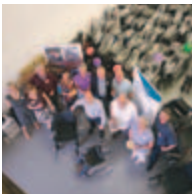
physiotherapists (Eileen and Pam), two OTs (Gunn and Gail), technician Graham, administrator Linda and me as general factotum made up the team from Wheels for the World. On the fourth day of the distribution I asked Pam how she thought things were going. Without hesitation she blurted 'BRILLIANT!' I think that summed up our feelings. We were blessed with the lovely fellowship and support of the local team of RILD (Response Initiative for Learning Disabilities); the weather was just right with heavy rain just missing us twice, no tummy bugs and no mishaps throughout the distribution. Recipients ranged from children to one 98 year old lady, and we saw a massive 92 people on the final day. It felt like we were going out with a flourish!

You can find much more from our team in their on-the-spot blogs on the Through the Roof website. Visit www.throughtheroof.org/wheels-blog for day-by-day reports.

Eileen, one of the team physios, wrote to thank all Wheels supporters, saying, 'if you are one of those supporters who pray for the International teams then we thank you from the bottom of our hearts. We on the frontline need you to lift us up in prayer so that we can renew our strength each day. You are every bit as much a part of the team as those of us who go to foreign shores. Please keep up this vital work, it's only when you get to glory that you will be aware of all those lives you've touched. **Thank you!**



A Life-Changing Holiday



In Our Wheelhouse



Energising Area Networks



Walk a Mile in my Shoes

Moving People

by Tim Wood, CEO



CEO, Tim Wood by our new offices in Epsom

Through the roof

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One Monday morning driving to work I was searching for a parking space. Unusually, I tried a side road where I never normally find one, but I spotted a space immediately. Thank you Lord! Switching off the engine I saw a sign in the sky (literally) - an estate agent's board reading, 'Offices - To Let'. On a closer look, I found buildings I never knew existed, set back from the road with a ground floor office to rent, just 400m from TTR's current location!

The week before, our landlords had confirmed they would be vacating the building, requiring us to re-locate. We had anticipated this and been looking for office accommodation - without success, until this discovery! The premises suited us perfectly and we have just moved in.

I find the Lord speaks to me most clearly during early morning as I wake or during travelling, before my mind is crowded with the demands of life. As well as physically moving offices, I have sensed the Lord prompting a move in other ways. I'm reading an excellent book that defines the purpose of a Christian Leader to

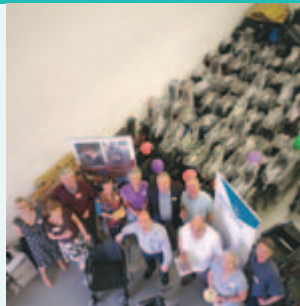
'move people on to God's agenda'. I am inspired and challenged by that message, along with an increasing desire to pray for staff, volunteers and supporters for God's plans for every individual. As my friend Brian, of Breadline, observes, "It's all about my relationship with God, your relationship with God, and my relationship with you."

Please pray the move is a blessing - Michael Jamison managed the process excellently and our solicitors, Camerons, have been very supportive. I am committing to move deeper into what God wants for the charity and for every one of us as individuals. I wonder how God might want you to move?

(Our phone number, email addresses and PO Box for post all remain the same following the move. We look forward to hearing from you!)

In Our Wheelhouse

Wheels contacts and visitors from local churches were invited to the grand opening of our new Wheelchair Warehouse in Aldershot on the 27th June. Visitors enjoyed a short presentation on the work of Wheels, as well as a tour around the new facility. The new warehouse has now been made suitable for our storage and shipping needs, and we're looking forward to all the ways in which it will help us in developing Wheels' work in the future. A huge thank you to Glenda and Malcolm Pike for all the years of use of their barn - we hope having it back is useful!



Opening the warehouse, and meeting local contacts

If you have a wheelchair (particularly a child's chair) or mobility aid you would like to donate to Wheels for the World, please get in touch with the office on **01372 749955** to arrange a suitable time to drop it round.

Wheeling into the Future

More Wheels distributions are coming up!



Plans for the next two years of Wheels distributions are taking shape. Arrangements need to be firmed up with our partners but here's an early preview. If you're interested in volunteering, please do apply early, indicating your preferred country. The teams for 2013 filled up very quickly so don't miss out.

2014

April: Kenya (Kimilili)

June: Albania

October: Uganda or Zambia

2015

April: Kenya (Nyeri)

July: Ghana or Zambia

October: Kenya (Elburgon)

Churches inc

Fellowship DCF

Wheels for the world

integr8

Our Vision

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

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Another great year!

A Life-Changing Holiday

TTR's Holiday for Families with Autistic Children

Our family holiday at Dalesdown has now been running for eight years, and every time we're pleased to learn of the stories of families and helpers whose lives have been changed by four short days in the Sussex countryside.

For one family, first time visitors whose 13 year old daughter, Emma, only received a diagnosis 18 months ago, it was a great opportunity to meet Christians with similar needs, and learn ways to deal with some mutual struggles.

'I've really struggled with Emma's autism because ... it's not immediately visible, even to people who have experience with autism,' wrote her mum, Louise. 'She hides her feelings from others until they reach a peak and all come out... Emma does struggle in a quiet way ... she found it difficult to join in with group activities, but she had a lovely time with her helper, and on the last day, as people began to see Emma's difficulties, Paula came to Emma and did some one-on-one ministry which was really lovely.

I felt I learnt to accept her with the autism, stop worrying what others think and leave it all with God ... Sophie, Emma's sister, said she loved being with the other siblings... The girls' long faces all the way home told me they'd had a fantastic time!

The holiday can make a big difference to helpers too, as two-time carer, Suzanne, writes...

'As Dalesdown arrived and as my little chap got out of the car, it became apparent that he had a lot of energy, as he began to run up and down the field for over 2 solid hours! I couldn't keep up with him and knew I wasn't going to cope. I felt such a failure.



Face painting and craft were popular on cold spring days!



Lots of the children made papier-mache pigs during the week

Margaret noticed that I was looking stressed and asked if I needed a break. It was all I could do to keep the tears from coming. The Lord answered my prayer. By the next day, I was able to swap charges with a younger carer, and began helping a young girl, who also wouldn't sit down for long but didn't run everywhere! During the week I got to know the families and felt so helpless yet privileged to be part of their lives, even just for a few days.

These families really have God to rely on. It has definitely changed the way I view my own children. I try not to stress over things that really don't matter and to celebrate my children's and my own individuality. God has reopened my eyes to trusting him for the little things as well as the big things. Thank you Through the Roof for letting me be a part of this.'

The whole holiday was a great success, with ten families enjoying the adventure trail, swimming, craft, praise parties, and plenty of time to make new friends (plus an abundance of cake). Despite colder-than-usual weather - including one snowy picnic - everyone had a great time at our new excursion to Tilgate Park. Holidaygoers explored the maze, the zoo,

and had a brief go on the playpark, before bundling into warm cars and heading back for another packed evening.

Next year's holiday is happening from 14th to 17th April – please get in touch with Margaret at the office (Margaret@throughtheroof.org or [01372 749955](tel:01372749955)) if you're interested in coming along as a guest or volunteer as part of a life-changing experience.

From Joni Eareckson Tada

Dear Roof-breaking Friends...

I love the way our faith works with our actions – powerful things happen when we ‘put feet to our faith’ through our deeds of kindness. Like James 2:26 says, ‘As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.’

And at Through the Roof, we are demonstrating as well as declaring the love of Christ. We are portraying God's love as we proclaim it. Whenever we tell people about Jesus, we also show the difference Jesus makes through our deeds. It's what makes faith come alive!

This is why I'm so excited about all the good deeds happening through Through the Roof. I was thrilled when I learned that TTR's Wheels for the World team returned from Uganda having provided 286 disabled people with wheelchairs and the chance to hear about Jesus Christ! The whole purpose behind giving a wheelchair is to show how practical the love of



Jesus really is... we want to show that He not only gives hope, but hands-on help.

It's why I'm grateful to you for your prayers, volunteer and financial support – it's your way of backing up your faith with deeds. And at Through the Roof, we strive to be good stewards of your many investments in our ministry as together we keep reaching many more people with disabilities in the UK and beyond with the love of Christ. Thank you for your deeds of mercy which keep proving your faith in Jesus!



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We're All One Body

by Mike Townsend, TTR Chair of Trustees

Young Daniel came down to breakfast. “I'm sorry I woke you up in the night,” the little lad said, “it was dark, and I stubbed my toe on the way to the bathroom!”

“It was the scream that woke me. Not your toe,” I teased.

“But my toe made me scream!” He laughed.

Injury to one end of the body can have a huge effect on the other end! This is a clear example of Paul's description of the church working together as a body, ‘Now the body is not made up of one part but of many ... If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it’ (1 Corinthians 12:14 and 26).

TTR's vision is of ‘A world where all people live interdependently, mutually giving and receiving as God intended.’ There is a strong desire for us, as disabled people, to become independent. Living as we wish, and making our own choices is vital.

I was a runner in the 60s, and my best time was a mile in four minutes and seven seconds – just ten seconds off the world record at the time. As a totally blind person, I needed sighted guides, but none were fast enough to run the full distance with me. It was like a relay; at each quarter mile, I dropped one guide and picked up the next. No matter how great an athlete, or how independent I am, I could not have achieved my time without the support of others. God made us as individual personalities, but he didn't mean us to be loners. God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Relationship goes through the whole of creation – right at the start, Adam and Eve were together.

However, disabled people are usually the ‘receivers’ of support, and our gifts often go unrecognised. Understanding our God-given interdependence honours all individuals, not because of what they do, but who they are. Paul quotes Jesus by saying, ‘it is more blessed to give than receive’ (Acts 20:35). My church practices that interdependence – I am one of its leaders. Through the Roof's vision is God's vision – mutual interdependence.

Energising Area Networks

by Tim Wood, CEO



Our Bath Area Network at their first meeting. Groups are now meeting in Edinburgh, Bath and Liverpool

"I would have loved to join you, but am unable to be out for more than an hour at a time", responded Pat to an invitation to TTR's first Area Disability Ministry and Mission Network. "I began using a wheelchair twenty years ago. At that time it was impossible to access the toilets in a wheelchair, so I was unable to attend our normal place of worship. Since then I have only attempted to go to church twice! One had an accessible toilet but it was too dirty to catheterise in. The other had no toilet at all."

I was horrified at this lady's experience of church. How sad for her and what a loss of her gifts, perspectives and contribution to God's kingdom. I resolved to help her find an appropriate church, but she felt it was too late now and wanted to highlight the issues to 'help other people'.

Pat's testimony compelled members of the new Bath Network and TTR to do everything we can to stop this

scenario being repeated. Kerry, a volunteer, said "I have been re-energized to take steps in pursuing inclusive goals in my own church. There are things I've wanted to say and do for a long while and the Network has already spurred me on to make a start."

Perhaps you've been challenged by this and want to respond. You might be a Wheels team-member and not have fully appreciated mobility barriers in the UK. Maybe you benefit from a DCF group and haven't seen how others are excluded from Christian fellowship. Or you're a TTR activist and this story provokes you to redouble your efforts. Connecting together through prayer, encouragement, and sharing ideas can bless the whole church. Area Networks have started in Bath, Liverpool and Edinburgh, with much interest expressed elsewhere. Contact us if you'd like to be involved where you are.

Love by Post

by Jenny Edwards

The 'Love by Post' logo for the original Gospel Post



Come Fishing by CD or Tape

Early in 1977, having recently been discharged from hospital and coming to terms with life in a wheelchair, I had a vision of reaching into the lives of disabled children with the Gospel of Jesus. I had previously worked with children, and I felt the Lord wanted me to continue with that ministry. At that time I did not feel I could reach out to adults!

Years have passed since that day when Gospel Post was formed and the first tapes recorded and sent. We were sending God's love through the post to many youngsters then, and had the privilege of seeing some come to faith, even to see one baptised by immersion at a local church. Nowadays Gospel Post no longer exists by name, but has developed into a ministry for anyone who needs encouraging fellowship. It is now called Come Fishing and is sent out monthly on CD, costing just £1 a month (available by annual subscription). It's a very easy and helpful way of

sharing fellowship, drawing closer to God and keeping up with Through the Roof. The first half hour contains news and music (hymns and choruses) and the second half looks at the Bible in an easy to understand way, offering fellowship and the Good News of the Gospel in one hour! Ideal for both group listening or for individuals, many enjoy this form of communication every month.

If you would like to receive this CD (for yourself or for a group), please get in touch with the office. As you will realise, this is still sending 'Love by Post', just like in the early days.

'I'm Doing What God Wants Me To Do'



Michelle (l) and her pastor Ann Banks (r), who is a great advocate and provider of practical support.

Michelle Blackshaw supports Wheels for the World through making and selling her own jewellery. She's a regular commenter and great encourager on Through the Roof's Facebook page, and we caught up with her to ask about how her experience of disability led her to take part in TTR's work.

Hi Michelle. How did you hear about TTR?

A friend gave me a copy of Joni's biography. I was touched by the book, and thought 'if Joni can do it, I can do it!' I searched online for a Christian disability charity to support and discovered Wheels. The stories of people crawling, being given a wheelchair and freedom to go to school or work inspired me. I feel like I'm doing what God wants me to do.

Have you always been disabled?

I was reasonably active when younger, but I had epilepsy. It caused lots of falls (leading to breaking my jaw five times, and burns from falling in a fireplace). Over time, the damage has resulted in me being unable to stand or walk (I use a hoist, wheelchair or stay in bed), plus other health issues. I have carers visiting five times a day and am currently unable to get to church.

What do you do for Wheels?

I make jewellery (from my bed) and sell it. If can't get to an event, people from my church collect and set up the stall.

Tell us a bit about your church

I love my church (Elim Pentecostal, Chesterton). It keeps me going! They've set up the online video programme Skype so I can interact remotely with meetings, house groups and exhibitions (including selling my jewellery!) When I could attend, they moved the worship group on the stage so I could play keyboard as part of the group, rather than set apart.

What do you get from fundraising for Wheels?

I feel I'm looking after God's people, and giving something back for what people do for me. Just because I can't get out on the street doesn't mean I can't do anything!



The Parachute Bible Story workshops at CRE introduced lots of groups to this fun inclusive resource

A Great Exhibition

At this year's Christian Resources Exhibition at Sandown, the TTR stand was abuzz with people interested in our new resource: Parachute Bible Stories. Tim gave two presentations in the 'Churches for All' zone, leading groups of volunteers through a few of these simple and inclusive stories, and everyone had such a good time that we sold a large number of the books at our stand afterwards. Our other focus this year was on our DCF holidays – particularly the need for more helpers. We were delighted to meet so many supporters, and to make new contacts for our work, as well as chat with exhibition-goers about better ways to include everyone in their church's life.

If you'd like to sign up as a DCF holiday helper, or find out more about our resources, please get in touch on **01372 749955** or **info@throughtheroof.org**.

Supporting the People of Dancu

Integr8 Returns to Moldova

An Integr8 team will be travelling to Moldova in September to assist the creation of a disability support group in Dancu village. Our team of eight will be visiting disabled people and families at home, following arrangements made by in-country contacts. Then, working with local church members, we'll help create some appropriate opportunities to include and encourage disabled people.

We can do this thanks to the solid groundwork and passion of several parties and Integr8's visits in 2012 and 2011. Key figures include the Christian social worker who works from the Mayor's office, the Dancu Baptist Church, and the Tabita community project in Dancu. They're all contacts of Brian Pile of UK charity Breadline, who we've worked with on previous education visits, and Nigel Drury met with everyone during a recce visit in May.

Our team will be spending eight days in Dancu, a rural area in the southwest of Moldova, near the Romanian border. Moldova is caught along the West/East divide. At one time a part of Romania, it came under Soviet control after the Second World War. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, it was left without clear direction, and remains unable to convince the EU that it meets the requirements for membership. Moldova is in great need of ways to



Winter travel on the 2012 Moldova trip. This year's mission will build on our earlier work and contacts in Dancu.

promote inclusion, break down the stigma of disability and equip people to support an inclusive society, and we're very glad to be able to work with people there.

If you want to use your skills to support lasting change in Moldova and other areas, please get in touch. We're looking for people with professional experience, including teachers, occupational therapists and social workers or family/personal experience of disability, and would be glad to hear from you.



Congratulations...

...to TTR's Peter Tye and Joanna on the wonderful occasion of their wedding on 18th May at St Saviour's, Guildford. Please pray for them as they begin married life together.

Paving the Way

by Jenny Edwards

Jenny could only see obstacles from her window, but the work is moving fast!

How many of you have read Romans 8:28 ('And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose'), but find it hard to see the good coming out of a situation? The picture shows the exit to my road, and, you are right, I cannot get out! For three days, the development work has meant there is no way that a wheelchair user can traverse all the mud and vehicles between me and the exit to the road.

Yet, what you cannot see from this photo (or from my window!) is that the end of the cul-de-sac is finished, block paving has been laid, homes are finished, smart car ports are in place and it actually all looks very posh indeed.



How like our lives, where we see the part that is causing us problems, but cannot see the whole picture. I shall be housebound for three days, but in a month's time, when all the work is finished, I will have forgotten the chaos of today.

Our God is a God of the impossible – he sees the whole picture, and He only has our well-being in mind. So hang in there and be patient. God will work all things together for your good and you will soon have a testimony of His goodness to share with many others.

(You will all be glad to hear that the three days of work is over, and Jenny is now free to come and go as she likes!)

“Walk a Mile in my Shoes”

Carla and Sarah are two first year students at Queens University Belfast, both living at Presbyterian Chaplaincy Derryvolgie Halls and enjoying University life. Carla has Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome, a muscular condition that causes easy dislocation of her major joints. This and other minor physiological problems mean that Carla uses a wheelchair most of the time.

The two girls struck a close friendship out of mutual respect and a common Christian faith. As Sarah spent time with Carla she saw the difficulties Carla had to overcome just to achieve the ordinary, and felt humbled by her friend's resilience, optimism and determination. Even so, Sarah thought she had a good insight into difficulties faced by wheelchair users until she experienced them herself.



Sarah (l) and Carla (r) during Sarah's 24-hour challenge

Carla had been taken to hospital and upon leaving found that both her wheelchairs (electric and manual) were still at the Student Union. Both girls agreed to take one chair each back to their halls of residence. Carla set off in the electric, while Sarah pushed the manual chair, but they decided it would be a challenge for Sarah to try out life as a wheelchair user! She quickly discovered that life using the chair was very different from life pushing a chair; high kerbs were difficult to overcome without assistance, pavement camber pulled her towards traffic and the ubiquitous cars parked on pavements were regular obstacles. Sarah saw Carla's life in a new light.

As they chatted about this, they decided they would extend that challenge and see if Sarah could spend 24 hours as a wheelchair user without using her legs at all, to raise some sponsorship for Wheels for the World. Sarah completed her 24 hour challenge on 13th February and between them the girls have raised over £900!

Through the Roof's work raises awareness of barriers to access, and the ways in which they can be removed, both physically and through understanding. God has taught the girls so much from this experience and they both have confidence in the future knowing that He is in control regardless of whether they are standing or sitting.



Already difficult ground, like this flooded street, became much more complicated for Sarah during the challenge.



Excellent fundraising work at the Ashtead village day, where dedicated volunteers collected £650 for Wheels.

Give it Up!

Ashtead parishioners from St George's and St Giles' churches have raised £3,520 by saving £1 a day for the 40 days of Lent to sponsor a wheelchair. "This is the sixth year we've participated in the Lent Wheelchair Scheme, and people collect in different ways", says Karen, Volunteer Community Fundraiser. "Evergreen, a group for older members in our churches, each donates £1 and they sponsor a wheelchair as a group. Jackie usually gives £40 without giving up anything, but this year she decided to give up biscuits. Peter gave up beer with the idea of passing the money saved to Wheels for the World. When he told his daughter that he planned to donate £40 at the end of Lent, she asked where you could get a pint for only a pound in Ashtead. Peter ended up raising enough to sponsor 4 wheelchairs!" If you'd like to try a fun fundraising scheme like the '40 days', please get in touch and we can help you get organised.