



# vital link

The Newsletter for Through the Roof



Remote Retreat



Life-Transforming Disability Inclusion



Sharing Skills



Help Us Spread The Message



## “Today God Has Answered My Prayers”

**Wheels for the World’s first Supported Distribution in Uganda, 2021, by Dave Camp, team member.**

“I thank God that He kept me alive until today,” said James, a 58 year man in the Bidi Bidi refugee camp in Uganda, “since July 2016 I suffered without a wheelchair. But today, God has answered my prayers through you, Hope Health Action and Through the Roof. I was a burden to my children, relatives, and neighbours whenever I wanted to travel to hospital, church, social gatherings, or visiting. But now I really appreciate your help and support towards my life. May God bless you abundantly, continue praying for us in the Camp and also supporting us.”

In our previous visit to Bidi Bidi in 2019, we were humbled by the stories that we heard. This time was no different, as we heard from people like James. His disability was caused by robbers in South Sudan who cut his leg, head and hands. They left him unconscious, and in the morning he was taken to hospital where his right leg was amputated below the knee. His wife divorced him due to his disability. We were told that God blessed them with 6 children before the divorce. He said he has struggled with life since then, but that the gift of a wheelchair would make a huge difference for him.

This is just one of the many stories that we have heard. We were also encouraged to hear

that 9 people gave their lives to Jesus in just the first two days of the distribution.

**“We were also encouraged to hear that 9 people gave their lives to Jesus in just the first two days of the distribution.”**

Through the Roof’s first Supported Distribution of 135 wheelchairs and other walking aids ran each Monday and Tuesday from 1st February to the 16th March. Like our normal distributions, this was planned carefully with therapists and techies, providing support to the partner organisation, Hope Health Action (HHA) in the vast Bidi Bidi Refugee Camp in the north-west of Uganda. The UK team was led by Jill Jenkinson, with Lynne Mosher as deputy, and had met with HHA staff on a zoom call before the start. For some of us it was good to see our Ugandan partners again after first meeting them on the 2019 trip. However, because of Covid-19, this distribution was to be very different from that one.

We were pleased to hear that several of the team had been on a World Health Organisation wheelchair programme to develop their skills as they would take the lead in the distribution and call us for assistance. They had already carried out assessments on the people who were to be given wheelchairs and aids.

*(Continued on page 2)*



## Contact Details

Through the Roof, Alpha House, Alpha Place, Garth Road, Morden, Surrey, SM4 4TQ

**Phone:**  
01372 749955

**Email:**  
info@throughtheroof.org

**Web:**  
www.throughtheroof.org



## Our Vision

*'... is all people enjoying life together, mutually giving and receiving, as God intended'*

## Our Mission

*'... is transforming lives through Jesus with disabled people'*

*Through the Roof Charitable Trust Ltd is a UK Registered Company number 04201510 with offices at Alpha House, Alpha Place, Garth Road, Morden, Surrey, SM4 4TQ. It is also a Registered Charity Number 1087788.*

*Quotes are sometimes edited for clarity and length*

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*(Continued from page 1)*

Each day started with the session team therapist and techie checking with the Ugandan team on WhatsApp and a brief time of prayer. The success of video calls varies because of poor internet connections, so for most sessions we were sent photos of the clients to comment on and/or give advice. Each day the HHA team gained in confidence and ability and did a marvellous job. It's a very different sort of distribution for the UK team, but technical challenges were overcome, new ways of working developed, and many lives

changed, and we're delighted to be able to continue this work despite the restrictions of the pandemic.

We are planning for future Supported Distributions, as well as returning to in-person work once it's possible again. To find out more, or to support the work, please visit [www.throughtheroof.org](http://www.throughtheroof.org) or contact Shaun, our International Missions Manager on **01372 749955** or [shaun@throughtheroof.org](mailto:shaun@throughtheroof.org).

## Addressing Issues

Over the past year, we've made the switch over to a new database for all our contacts and mailings, which should allow us to get the word out about Through the Roof much more efficiently. If we're now writing to you at the wrong address, or have any other of your details incorrect, please let

us know, and we'll get it changed as quickly as possible. If you'd like to update how you get the Vital Link, or any other communication, from us please call **01372 749955**, or email [peter@throughtheroof.org](mailto:peter@throughtheroof.org).

## Remote Retreat

With holidays and retreats not a possibility while the pandemic continues, Through the Roof has been moving some of our events online. At the end of November we ran a pilot online retreat which was repeated with new participants at the beginning of February.

Over three two-hour sessions during the week we looked at the life of Samuel Rutherford who, in the seventeenth century, was banned from his parish and placed under house arrest. During his time as a prisoner, he went through a journey from depression and fear through turning his gaze towards God, to finding an amazing joy in what he called "love-feasts with Jesus". We looked at what we could learn from his experiences, and how much of this finds an echo in the Psalmist's experience in Psalm 27.

Participants were provided with 'goody-bags' of craft activities to engage in together and were also invited to book a personal prayer slot in between sessions with one of the couples who were helping to run the retreat. Each person valued this time and space to share, talk and pray in confidence. Following the success of these pilots, we are planning to hold more online events, and to set up regular online groups where people can connect, chat and pray for one another. We will need to cover our costs for running week-long events, but the prices will be kept to a minimum to enable everyone to have access and participate. If you're interested in finding out more, get in touch to register your interest or keep an eye on our website and Facebook page.

We are looking forward to the day when we can all meet again and our retreats and activity and seaside holidays can recommence, but in the meantime we are going to use online means to stay in touch and provide the fun, friendship and spiritual support that have characterised our holidays.

To find out more about future retreat plans, please contact us on [info@throughtheroof.org](mailto:info@throughtheroof.org) or **01372 749955** or keep an eye on [www.throughtheroof.org](http://www.throughtheroof.org) or our Facebook page.



**Join us for a future retreat. More are coming soon.**



# Celebrating Our New Church Disability Toolkit

We are thrilled to launch our new Church Disability Toolkit. The aim of this resource is to equip churches to become more positive about disability inclusion. It's full of bite-sized ideas for disability inclusion and covers different roles within the church, including audio-visual, pastoral, youth and children's work, and much more.

This exciting new resource is available free to all our Roofbreakers. Contact us to find out more about

accessing the pack, or to sign up as a Roofbreaker. We'd love to hear how you use it, and pray it will be a life-transforming way of enabling churches to be fully welcoming for disabled people.

For further information email: [janet@throughtheroof.org](mailto:janet@throughtheroof.org) or ring us on **01372 749955**.

## Funds Flow From Flowstore

We are extremely grateful for the on-going corporate sponsorship of Wheels for the World by Flowstore. Last year they donated a massive £35,000 from company profits which will make a huge difference to enabling the work to continue despite the uncertainty of these times and change the lives of hundreds of people in the greatest need.

Chairman of the company, Simon Dennis (who is also a Trustee of Through the Roof) commented, "At Flowstore, we are now in our 4th year as an Employee-Owned business, and it's been great to see the company growing and progressing despite the difficulties of 2020. Our Corporate Social Responsibility policy encourages charitable support as part of our ethos, together with care for the environment, our staff, suppliers and customers. I am delighted that the Trustee

Directors have continued to provide funds to charities of their choice, especially that we have been able to make a difference to Through the Roof, and particularly Wheels For The World, for whom Flowstore support is now actually in its 10th year. We wish the charity safety and success in achieving their aims in 2021 and beyond."

Some members of the Flowstore Charity Commission gave their thoughts about the donation:

"WFTW are doing a fantastic job by helping people do what most of us take for granted - move. Sitting in a wheelchair opens a much wider perspective for those who cannot walk on their own feet. I believe it brings a smile to their face, gives hope and makes people feel useful and needed as they can now do things. I am very proud and happy that I can take part in supporting good causes like those provided by WFTW." - Ewa Mita

"I'm really proud that the company sets aside a proportion of its profits to give to charities, enriching and bringing hope to the lives of those less fortunate, especially in a time of global crisis." - Sam Walker

"Given the incredible difficulties we have all faced in the last 12 months, I am delighted that FlowStore have continued to support this fantastic cause. This is the time we need to be able to continue our support and it makes me proud to still be supporting WFTW." - Lauren Fullarton

A massive thank you to Flowstore for all their support - you can find out more about them at [www.flowstore.co.uk](http://www.flowstore.co.uk).

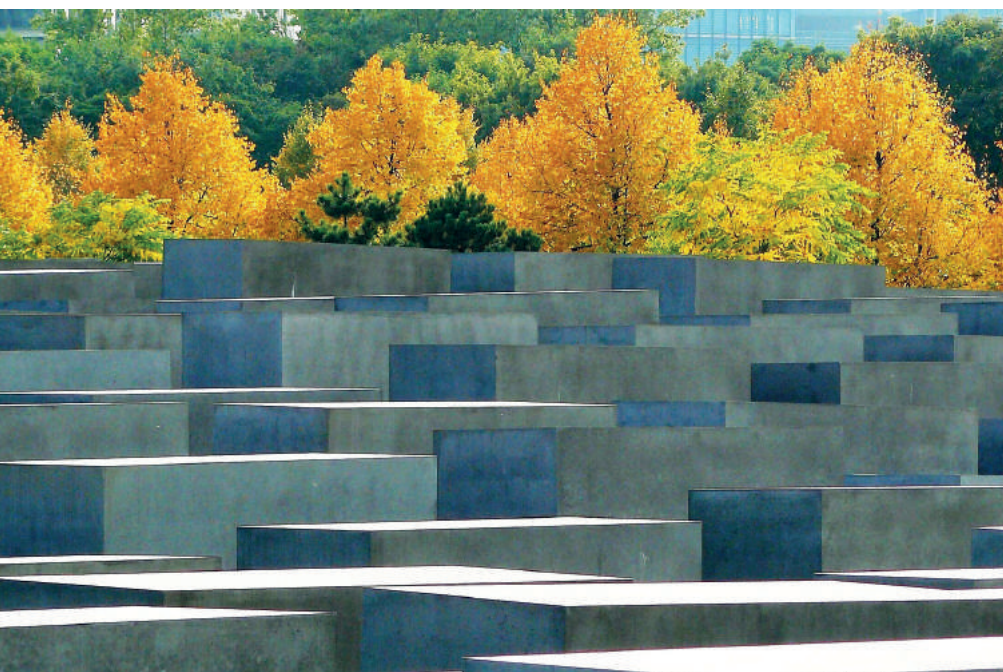


**Ewa and Zita receive a thank you poster for Flowstore's donations for 2020**

# “Life Is Sacred”

By Dr. Mike Townsend, Chair of Trustees

**As I write, it is Holocaust Memorial day. Edith, my wife, lost many family members to this mass slaughter. Her mother escaped as a teenager and found welcome and hope with a Christian family.**



**The Berlin Holocaust Memorial**

We mourn the millions of Jews lost. Did you know that 250,000 disabled people were also killed in the murder factories of the death camps? Eugenics is the concept that the population can be improved by the elimination of less able members or people of inferior race. Disabled people were destroyed along with Jews as contaminants of the German master race.

I was grieved to learn this from the BBC television programme ‘Silence, the Hidden Story of Disabled Britain’. ‘Silence’ went on to show how workhouses were places for disabled people to be dumped, and excluded from society. Disabled people were sterilised to prevent the spread of their disabilities! Are you horrified? It couldn’t happen today! Or could it?

Lord Sumption, a former supreme court judge, was on BBC 1’s ‘Big Questions’. He told Deborah James, who has advanced ovarian cancer, that her life was less valuable than those of young people.

Deborah James responded, “Life is sacred and I don’t think we should make these judgement calls”.

Do you feel that you are of personal value? Jesus highlighted this part of God’s law: “love your neighbour as yourself” (**Luke 10 27**). If we don’t have self worth, then we won’t have much love to offer to our neighbours. Jesus underlines how valuable we are to God. “Don’t be afraid of those who want to kill you. They can only kill your body; they cannot touch your soul. Fear only God. ... Not even a sparrow, worth only half a penny, can fall to the ground without your Father knowing it.” (**Matthew 10 28-29**).

Jesus always makes it personal. We belong to him and that gives us immense value. “My sheep recognize

my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them away from me.” **John 10 27-28**.

Jesus values us.

## Celebrating 25 Years

Next year will be the 25th Anniversary of Through the Roof. It hardly seems like any time at all since we celebrated our 20th birthday. During that year we made a new DVD to profile the work; and distributed party packs for supporters to promote the charity and raise funds. It culminated in 200 of us gathering for a special service of thanksgiving at St George’s, Ashted, which included the amazing balloon sculpture depicting the Through the Roof Bible story. Plans may be a little different this time but whatever we do let’s join together in praising God for all he has done and is doing through the charity. Sign up at [info@throughtheroof.org](mailto:info@throughtheroof.org) if you’re interested in receiving more information about our plans.



# Life-Transforming Disability Inclusion

## Great stories from our Luke 5 Awards

Wow—when disabled people are included in Christian life what a life-transforming difference it makes! We're celebrating two 'Luke 5 Awards' for Christian disability inclusion and hear the stories behind the awards...

Congratulations to **Ingatstone Elim Church**, one of our first 'Luke 5 Award' recipients. Sheri Cavill is registered blind and attends Ingatstone Elim Church, where she says "Our Pastor and eldership team are fully accepting of disabled people and willing to make adjustments." Sheri says "I receive large print materials, I am encouraged to be myself and help to lead services in a local care home. I play drums in one of our two worship groups. I give words of encouragement, dance and our building is fully accessible. Accessible website in progress."

Sheri says that this positive attitude of the church gives her 'the space to be myself', to glorify God and to know too that other disabled brothers and sisters are welcome in the church.

A Luke 5 Award has also been awarded to **The Journey Community**, a ministry led by Rev Cath Hollywell in Derbyshire. Sarah Johnson made this nomination due to the transformation it has brought to her life.



Sarah says, "I feel alive! Valued for the disabled person I am, in an embracing and encouraging way"

**"They have accepted me for me (without the 'what's wrong with you' conversation!)"**

Sarah says, "I've struggled to find a worship space that didn't try to just make me fit into an ableist world view." However, she says about the Journey Community: "They have accepted me for me (without the 'what's wrong with you' conversation!)"

"The work on Zoom is amazing, even when the group has met and I wasn't able to be physically present they zoomed me in! They have met outside to ensure



Sheri Cavill presents the Luke 5 award to Pastor Lee Carmichael

accessible comfort, meaning I could attend on my scooter. They have encouraged me to be open about some of the struggles of living my disabled life; meaning that I've turned up on-line in PJs and in excruciating pain in bed but been present at morning prayer; something I desperately wanted to attend as it brings me comfort. They have encouraged me to use my gifts, attend training, develop prayer resources; to dare to look at possibilities."

When asked what difference this has made, Sarah says: "I feel alive! Valued for the disabled person I am, in an embracing and encouraging way"

"At last I feel that I am in a space where I can grow as the person God made, in a way that is appropriate to my limitations but not in a way where I'm made to feel less. I'm so grateful for all Cath and the other community members have done and I honestly believe they deserve this award."

**"At last I feel that I am in a space where I can grow as the person God made"**

If you have experience of living with disability and would like to recognise how your church/ministry or an individual has enabled inclusion for you, please contact Through the Roof or fill in the Luke 5 Award nomination form online: [www.throughtheroof.org/luke](http://www.throughtheroof.org/luke). Do follow us on Facebook by searching for 'TTRChangeslives' on there to celebrate the awards with us.

# The Effects Of Covid-19 In Africa

By Shaun Burrows, International Missions Manager

**We're hearing from our overseas contacts that the Covid-19 pandemic is having a dreadful effect in the lives of billions of people in developing countries. The consequences of the disease are exacerbated by the measures taken to counter the spread of the virus, and the conditions in which people already live. Rev Davis Gatua of Kenya, Clifford Masambuko of Malawi and Rev Ndagijimana Dominique of Rwanda are partners of Through the Roof and involved in our overseas work. Below are some of their observations...**

People are facing starvation with domestic violence, rape, murder, suicide, drug abuse and alcoholism having increased fourfold in some countries. Large swathes of people are returning to the rural areas, inadvertently spreading the virus as they go. Covid-19 has enabled widespread commercial sexual exploitation with child prostitution the most dominant, particularly amongst those who were orphaned through the HIV/Aids Pandemic.

As with all crises there are always positive outcomes too. People are turning back to God as they realise their mortality and vulnerability. Rev Dominique has distributed food and cleaning products to 280 families, including food hampers to disabled people. Rev Davis of Kenya is on the Covid19 response committee for the county in which he lives, and chairperson of the Covid19 response programme for the local high school in Elburgon. He has distributed food and second-hand clothes to 400 families over the past year, many of whom support a disabled person in their household. He said on one occasion while distributing food to impoverished families in a deep wooded area he came across a family with a disabled child crawling around on the floor. He reported it to the local chief who informed a member of parliament who in turn fetched a wheelchair from Nairobi for the child. He presented the wheelchair to the family

together with enough food for the next three months.

We remain committed to our work alongside our international partners and are thankful to God that the pandemic has challenged us to find alternative ways of helping them. We want to ensure that the needs of disabled people are met through our ongoing Wheels for the World programme, using technology to support them. In addition, a new project aims to provide disabled adults with the skills, training and tools to generate an income. Your prayers and financial support are vital in helping us as we continue to work alongside our partners to reach disabled people in the global south and other developing countries around the world.



**Three recipients of mobility aids on our Uganda Supported Distribution**



# Sharing Skills

Our international work is growing, with a new stream looking to support our in-country partners with developing skills among local disabled people so that they can learn and generate an income to provide for themselves and their families.

We are currently exploring options and the hope is that we could work with partners to provide tools and enable training in such things as bicycle/wheelchair repairs, sewing and tailoring, plumbing, IT and Electrician skills etc. We are pleased that volunteer Wheels team member, Dave Camp is coordinating this programme for us. Dave writes, 'On my Wheels trip to Kumi, Uganda, a year ago, I and a few other team members visited a disabled lady called Josephine. She lives in a rural location and had come to the distribution to get a wheelchair a few days before. We watched her as she sat on the ground making clothes with a sewing machine that had been given to her previously. We can make a big difference and give people an income and dignity and I saw the potential impact that this programme could have'.

The Covid-19 pandemic has delayed the project but we're confident we can make progress soon. In addition, Bibles will be obtained and given out to trainees, and there is the possibility we can match them up with a growing band of international Roofbreakers in Africa who can



**Dave working to fit a wheelchair**

disciple them on their journey.

'We are hoping and praying that lives will be transformed, not only economically, but also that the value of a disabled person will be recognised in their communities and that the name of Jesus will be made known and people commit their lives to Him.'

Watch our website, Facebook page and future Vital Link newsletters for ways you can contribute to this project.

## Channels Of Belonging

The Chair of Through the Roof, Mike Townsend, coined the phrase 'Channels of Belonging' during the first lockdown. It seems an excellent way to describe the new opportunities we are developing for disabled people, and their friends and family to connect in different ways for joy, friendship, and Christian input. We are already offering personal prayer and pastoral support by phone and are now providing more online retreats and small

group opportunities such as our 'coffee mornings/ afternoon tea' for chat and a short Biblical thought for the day. We are not aiming to replace the role of the local church but offer something for people that need some extra support.

Check our Facebook page for details of forthcoming activities.

## Tribute To Michael Mwanikha

We were very shocked and saddened to hear of the passing of Michael Mwanikha before Christmas. Michael was a very popular Kenyan volunteer who often joined our Wheels' teams whenever we were in East Africa. He had a passion for children and vulnerable people in the community and used his puppet ministry to engage with young and old. He was a good friend to many and filled people's lives with his smile, encouragement, joy and grace. We were honoured that our Partner Davis Gatua could represent Through the Roof by visiting Michael's family to share words of comfort and encouragement after his death. Michael leaves behind his wife, Irene, and 5 young children.



**Michael entertaining and teaching on a Wheels trip**

# Help Us Spread The Message

Our new website content to support individuals and churches

Sometimes, for various reasons, disabled people feel excluded from Christian life. Often churches are not aware of the barriers that exist. Individuals may not know who to approach and churches may not know how to respond. The truth is that we belong to one another through Jesus. Our new Church Inclusion website content aims to help with these issues – **helping churches** to be more aware and inclusive, **helping individuals** to know what they can do to help, and **helping disabled people** to find the support they need.

Here's an outline of what you will find. There is something for everyone who believes that disabled people should be fully included in Christian life.

Take a look yourself and spread the message far and wide! We can all help to make a difference.

## Church Inclusion

- **Roofbreakers** – how you as an individual can help disabled people in your church to be fully included, and how Through the Roof can support you with this.
- **Churches and Ministries** – how your church or ministry can include disabled people, including a new Church Disability Toolkit and information on available training.
- **Find a Church/Ministry** – a map of churches and ministries that are positive about disability inclusion and have a Roofbreaker/disability contact person. If your church isn't on the map yet, please ask them to join! It gives a positive message and helps disabled people know there is someone they can talk to about any concerns.
- **Celebrate Inclusion** – Good news stories encourage everyone! The Luke 5 Award celebrates life-changing Christian disability inclusion, and we also have video stories with disabled Christians sharing their experiences.
- **Pastoral Support** – One-to-one pastoral support for disabled people, a chance to have contact with others, and the opportunity to send prayer requests and pray for others.



Can you add your church to our map?

Explore the new content at [www.throughtheroof.org/forchurches](http://www.throughtheroof.org/forchurches) there's something for everyone!

## The Future of TTR

Through the Roof is often referred to as 'one big family'. Whether you are a prayer supporter, staff-member, volunteer, Trustee, Roofbreaker, mission team-member, donor, fundraiser or Vital Link reader, you are a part of what we do, as co-labourers with God in growing His Kingdom. We would really value your input to the charity's plans for the next few years. We are experiencing growth, change, and new opportunities and we would love to hear your perspective. Where have you seen God working through the charity? What are the vision and values we should hold on to, and what aspects of the work are coming to the end of their season? Where do you discern God is leading TTR?

Each of us will have different thoughts and feelings about the future, but if together we commit to listen to God's voice we're confident that we will find common threads that He is wanting to knit together. We want to see more of His children experiencing a life of Faith, Friendship and Freedom, all for His glory. We have a series of questions – for you to respond to as much or as little as you want. You can get your copy by emailing: [info@throughtheroof.org](mailto:info@throughtheroof.org), phoning us on **01372 749955**, or visiting [www.throughtheroof.org](http://www.throughtheroof.org) and looking for our 'Future of TTR' survey.



# 3 Good Deeds in 1



Sponsor a wheelchair for £42,  
and transform the life of a  
disabled person overseas

## RECYCLE

Save an old wheelchair  
from landfill



## RESTORE

Help prisoners contribute  
to society by refurbishing  
wheelchairs to 'as new' standard

## RESULT

Change the life of a disabled  
person in a developing country  
through the gift of a wheelchair



*"Thank you, may God bless you, you have made my life better!"*  
– Joyce, Wheelchair Recipient in Ghana



**Please return  
this form to:**

Through the Roof,  
Alpha House,  
Alpha Place,  
Garth Road,  
Morden, Surrey,  
SM4 4TQ

## All About Wheels

65 million disabled people worldwide need a wheelchair (World Health Organisation). Most of these people don't have the money or opportunity to buy one. Wheels for the World, an overseas programme of Through the Roof, restores and distributes previously-used wheelchairs to people in several African countries, giving disabled recipients increased independence and demonstrating the love of God in a practical way. See more at [www.throughtheroof.org](http://www.throughtheroof.org).



## Donor Details

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

Postcode: .....

Telephone no: .....

Email: .....

We take your personal data and privacy very seriously and only use your information to best provide you with the products and services you ask for e.g. sending our newsletter, or accounting for donations. We only hold personal data for as long as it is needed, and it is held securely and never passed on to external organisations. More information can be found in our Privacy policy.

- Tick here to receive our International Missions news by email
- Tick here to receive our Vital Link newsletter by email
- Tick here to receive our Vital Link newsletter by post

I would like to sponsor \_\_\_\_\_ wheelchair(s) at £42 per chair and/or \_\_\_\_\_ Bibles at £8 each

All wheelchair sponsors receive a photo certificate of a recipient after the trip—all Bible sponsors will receive a special bookmark to say 'Thank You'.

Name for sponsor certificate: \_\_\_\_\_

- I enclose a cheque for £ \_\_\_\_\_ made out to Wheels for the World **OR**
- I have sent money by bank transfer (BACS) (Please contact us with your address to let us know who you'd like your sponsorship certificate sent to) **OR**
- I would like to make a donation by credit / debit card of (amount): .....

Card number:

Security Code (Last 3 numbers on back of card):

Issue number (If applicable):  Valid from date:  /  Expiry date:  /

Signature: ..... Date:.....

## Other Ways to Give

Please visit [www.justgiving.com/ttr](http://www.justgiving.com/ttr) to donate directly and securely online, and reference 'Wheels Sponsorship'. To donate by bank transfer, use **A/C 00008105, sort 40 – 52 – 40** and reference 'Wheels' so your gift goes to Wheels for the World. Do let us know if you do this, so we can claim gift aid and keep you informed about the good work you're making possible. Or call us on **01372 749955** or email [info@throughtheroof.org](mailto:info@throughtheroof.org)

Wheels for the World is a programme of Through the Roof Charitable Trust Ltd, Registered Charity number 1087788 with registered offices at Alpha House, Alpha Place, Garth Road, Morden, Surrey, SM4 4TQ. It is also a Registered UK Company number 04201510.

## Gift Aid

Gift Aid enables us to make your gift go further without any additional cost to you.

I would like Through the Roof to treat as Gift Aid donations\* all qualifying gifts of money made:

Today  In the past 4 years  In the future

Please tick all boxes you wish to apply.

Date:

*giftaid it*

**or**

It is not possible for me to Gift Aid my donations.

\* I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Please notify the charity if you want to cancel this declaration, change your name or home address, or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains. If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

**Please return this form to:**  
Through the Roof, Alpha House, Alpha Place,  
Garth Road, Morden, Surrey, SM4 4TQ  
**01372 749955**