



# Vital Link

The Newsletter for Through the Roof | [www.throughtheroof.org](http://www.throughtheroof.org)

Transforming Lives Through Jesus with Disabled People

## Love That Moves: God's Image in Action in India



▲ God is love." 1 John 4:8 Care & prayer for an Indian widow.

In the heart of Kolkata (Calcutta), where some of the world's most vulnerable people live, our Wheels for the World team with partner, Sathyam Ministries, brought more than just mobility aids – they brought dignity, hope, and the tangible love of God. Each wheelchair given was more than a gift; it was a message: 'You are seen. You are valued. You are loved.'

Kolkata is home to thousands of disabled people, many of whom are hidden away or forgotten. But God never forgets. Alongside mobility equipment, the team shared the hope of Christ – handing out Bibles, audio Bibles, and messages of encouragement that lifted spirits as much as the wheelchairs lifted lives.

Picture the moment when someone who has spent years confined indoors finally wheels into the open air – a child beaming, an elderly man waving at neighbours. It's the joy of movement, of connection, of belonging. And it's holy ground.

Take Lolly – bright, resilient, full of purpose. Polio took her ability to walk as a baby, and she was abandoned shortly after. But God placed her in a loving children's home where she discovered faith, family, and her calling. Today, she's an award-winning social

worker who calls herself "a beautiful butterfly with broken wings." With her new self-propelling wheelchair and sturdy crutches, she's more ready than ever to keep spreading God's love to others on the margins. See Lolly in this issue's donation form.

Then there's Gourab, an 11-year-old boy who cannot walk or speak. His mother had carried him everywhere, without support or options. But love intervened. With care, teamwork, and prayer, the team fitted him with a custom wheelchair. As his mother wheeled him out – both of them smiling, perhaps for the first time in a long time — their faces said it all: this is what freedom looks like.



### In this issue:



'Made in God's image': its meaning?



Oscar loves Superbook in BSL.



Young fundraisers use their skills.

Accessible formats available: large print, audio, braille.  
Call 01372 749955 or email [info@throughtheroof.org](mailto:info@throughtheroof.org)

Thanks to your support, communities are living out the ABC of disability inclusion: **A**ccess to mobility, **B**elonging in community, and **C**ommission to flourish. This is what love looks like when it moves – and when it mirrors the heart of God.



# Love Is His Name

Emily Owen, award-winning author and Disability Awareness Sunday resource writer, explores the nature of God, in whose image we are made.

Who is God, who made us in His image  
(Genesis 1:27)?

We wouldn't be the first to ask that question: Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is His name?'"

Then what shall I tell them?"

God said to Moses, "I am who I am." (Exodus 3:13,14)

In Bible times, name and character were intertwined.

What is His name?

'I am who I am.'

God is God.

John, towards the end of the Bible, also answers Moses' question:

'God is love.'

Love is His name.

I have a wooden plaque, spelling 'Love' and decorated with stickers.

I made it at a craft evening, and all the others there also received a wooden plaque to decorate with matching stickers.

We all decorated our plaques slightly differently.

Identical plaques, identical bags of stickers, but individual decoration.



Our sticker placement was not identical. It was unique to each of us. Yet we all had love. God is love.

When we look at our lives, they are all different. Different abilities, and struggles, and likes, and dislikes.

Yet we all have love.

God has promised.

**John 3:16** does not say:

For God so loved some of us.

Or, for God so loved the able-bodied ones.

Or, for God so loved the popular ones.

Or, for God so loved the clever ones.

It says: For God so loved the world.....

Every single one of us.

God – the 'I am who I am' – is love, and He loves.

Love is who He is.

How could we, who are made in His image, show His love to His world?

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. (1 John 4:7)

## Show God's love on Disability Awareness Sunday

Reach out to disabled people in your community for Disability Awareness Sunday, or whenever you can. Join the growing movement to share the message that ALL are loved by God – on **Disability Awareness Sunday, 28 September 2025**, or any day!

Download the free resource materials, written by Emily Owen, so your church can explore the truth that disabled people, like ALL of us, are 'Made in God's Image'.

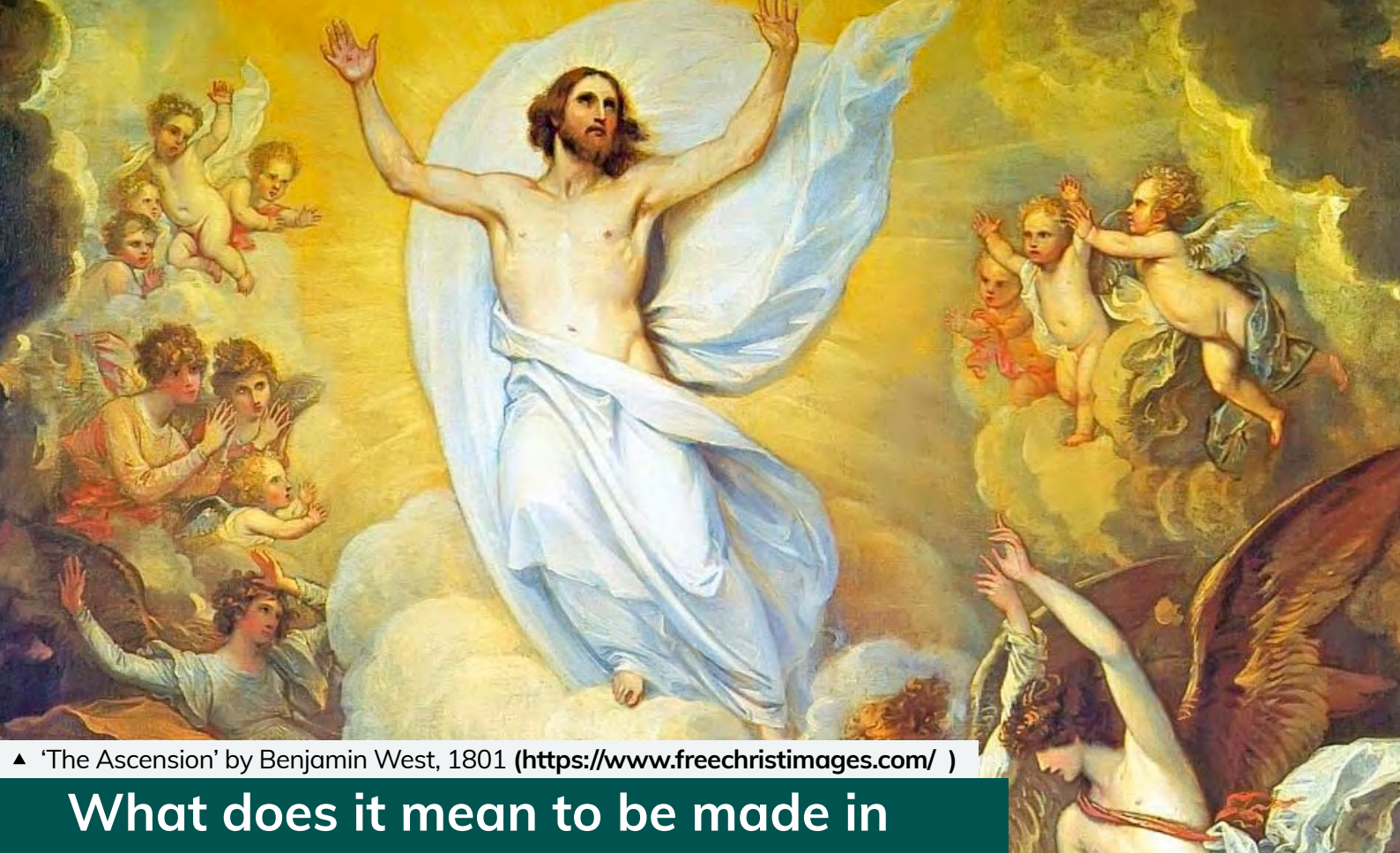
The free downloadable pack includes a 5-minute video of 'Emily's Story', suggested songs/hymns, prayers and sermon ideas. You can even order free postcards to hand out. Access the resource at: <https://bit.ly/DisabilityAwarenessSunday>. No matter our challenges, we're all 'wonderfully

made' in God's image – and when churches fully welcome disabled people, everyone is blessed. Sadly, 72% of disabled people in the UK report facing negative attitudes (Scope). Joining church can be a challenge. That's why this matters. Spread the word and join in DAS 2025.



Please pray that Disability Awareness Sunday will be celebrated in many more churches, and that the UK Church will catch the vision for disability inclusion.





▲ 'The Ascension' by Benjamin West, 1801 (<https://www.freechristimages.com/> )

# What does it mean to be made in the image of God?

**Ian Lasch is an autistic priest in the Episcopal Church (USA) and a PhD student at the University of Aberdeen's Centre for Autism and Theology, where he is researching and writing on autism and the image of God.**

Christians have come up with quite a few different possible answers about the meaning of 'Made in the image of God'. Some say it's a particular capacity, like rationality, which only humanity possesses. Others think it is some role humankind fulfils, like stewardship of creation or taking part in the work of creating. Some define it as human dependence upon each other. All of these might be faithful answers, but they all have their problems, too. Is it possible to define the image of God in one way that means everyone has it, and no human is lacking the image of God?

Any single definition means that some humans seem to bear the image more fully than others. But Scripture says that all humanity bears the image of God and is valuable for this reason. In **Matthew 25:31-46**, everyone is surprised to find out that Christ was present in the people that society thought were worthless or unimportant. But "just as [they] did it to one of the least of these," they did to Christ himself.

Maybe, then, we aren't meant to come up with an idea of the imago Dei (Image of God) that looks the same in every single human being. We worship an infinite God, but we are finite people. We might all bear God's image differently.

We might bear the image even in our disability, just like the disabled Christ we worship, who still bears the wounds of his crucifixion. The unique way that we were created might be our own individual way of showing God to the world.

If the image doesn't appear the same way in everyone, then the image of God isn't something we can just "set and forget." We can't assume the question is solved and then ignore it in our daily lives. Instead, seeking out ways that the person we are encountering in every moment reflects the glory of God means searching for God's presence in them. It means looking for the ways that God appears in everyone. If we're able to do that, the connection between loving God and loving our neighbour becomes much clearer. It is so much easier to love our neighbour when we see the ways God dwells in them. And it is so much easier to love God when we realise that we are, always and every day, surrounded by reminders of who God is: in the people we encounter, who are all beloved children of God.





# Radical Welcome, in God's Image

Trevor Hahn, Chair of Trustees, reflects on God, in whose image we are made.

God's holiness is one attribute that has always intrigued me. Wholly other, completely different, in a category all of His own. He cannot be compared to anyone, He is unique, one of a kind, separate, distinct, unparalleled, unadulterated, matchless, unrivalled, unequalled, absolute in purity and majesty. Yet, this holy, wholly other, utterly separate, and altogether distinct God chooses to make Himself known and desires to welcome everyone, even those whom everyone else rejects.

The same 'Holy, Holy, Holy ... Lord Almighty' whom Isaiah saw in a heavenly vision and proclaimed 'Woe is me ... I am ruined ... for I am a man of unclean lips' (**Isaiah 6:3-5**); the same God at whose feet Peter fell, after witnessing the miracle catch of fish, and proclaimed 'Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man,' (**Luke 5:8**); the same God welcomes the sinner, eats with tax collectors, and embraces the lost and broken. Our loving Father does not just welcome the prodigal son on his return, but runs – yes runs, against every rule of decorum and etiquette – to embrace him (**Luke 15:20**). Jesus eats with tax collectors and sinners (**Luke 5:27-32**); Jesus not only healed the woman with the issue of blood but also welcomed her back into community (**Luke 8:40-48**); Jesus welcomed a woman, excluded for 18 years, into His Kingdom by referring to her as a 'daughter of Abraham' (**Luke 13:10-17**).

God's welcome extends even further, He leaves the 99 sheep to seek the one that was lost (**Luke 15:1-7**); He leaves the party celebrating the prodigal son's return to bring back the elder son (**Luke 15:28**). And Jesus even left the glory of heaven to come to earth, emptying Himself of all but love to reveal to us the Father's welcome. He died for us on the cross so heaven's welcome would be available to each and every one of us.

Yet there is more. Not only did He welcome Isaiah with 'unclean lips' and Peter the 'sinful man' but He restores, transforms, cleanses, equips, and sends us out to extend His welcome to others. Isaiah, touched by a live coal, had his sin removed and was sent out with God's message. Peter was told 'Don't be afraid, from now on you will catch men', and he followed Jesus. Not only does Jesus welcome us, but He commissions us to go out and offer that welcome to others.

To whom is Jesus sending you?



▲ Welcome is something we can all model, like Jesus.



# Meet Oscar – who can now access the Bible by himself!

Oscar is a 19-year-old young man with Down Syndrome, who is also Deaf. More importantly, he is a follower of Jesus.

Oscar loves the stories of the Bible, but because he's unable to read due to his learning disability, he has never been able to access the Bible by himself. He has always relied on it being read to him and explained to him in British Sign Language. But now everything has changed... Oscar's favourite Bible animation series, Superbook, has just been made available with British Sign Language translation!

This is life-changing for Oscar, and to celebrate the difference this has made in Oscar's life, his mum Karen has helped him to nominate the makers of Superbook for a Luke 5 Award for Disability Inclusion. Through the Roof have been delighted to award it to Christian Broadcasting Network UK (CBN).

CBN first piloted one episode of Superbook with BSL interpretation and asked for feedback. Members of Through the Roof's Deaf Ministry Network gave feedback, and CBN responded magnificently in every possible way. The result is excellent, and Oscar's mum's reaction says it all...

"I'm so over-joyed with this - I feel quite tearful!... Oscar is unable to read so cannot access the Bible by himself. He relies on it being read to him and explained. Watching Superbook by himself has helped him to develop his faith and love for Jesus because it is so visual and engaging, causing his knowledge of the truth to grow."

Karen goes on to say, "I asked him just now 'Why do you like Superbook?' He looked up at me and said 'Because it's about Jesus. I want to follow Him' and went back to carrying on watching the episode!"

CBN were delighted with the award, and very touched by Oscar's story. Luke Hancorn, Director of Mission Advancement at CBN, said:

"On behalf of the entire team here at CBN UK, I want to extend our heartfelt thanks for nominating Superbook for a Luke 5 Award. What an incredible encouragement it was to receive your message!"

"Reading Oscar's story truly moved us, it touched every heart on our team. We feel so blessed and inspired to hear how Superbook in British Sign

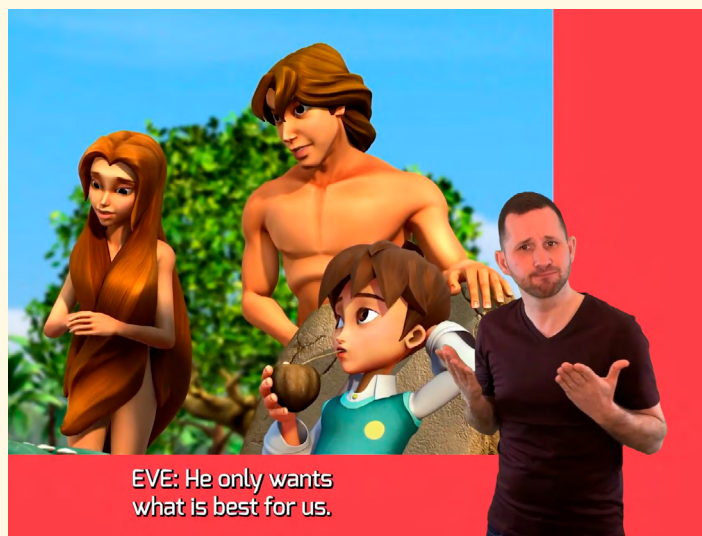


▲ Oscar, 19, loves hearing about Jesus from Superbook.

Language has played such a powerful role in his journey with Jesus. Stories like this are exactly why we do what we do."

"We're excited to share that we're about to begin translation of Season 2 into British Sign Language – a milestone we're celebrating with great joy."

To watch Series 1 of Superbook in British Sign Language, go to [www.youtube.com/@SuperbookUK](https://www.youtube.com/@SuperbookUK) or find out more at [www.cbn.uk/superbook](https://www.cbn.uk/superbook)



Please pray and advocate for all Christian media to be made accessible, so that everyone has equal access to the Gospel message.



# Creating in God's Image: Gillian's Story

Roofbreaker Gillian Clayton from Colchester has been building her confidence in sharing her giftings and her story – on video and in writing. Sharing our voice is so important, including for disabled people, with many potential barriers to being heard and responded to.

Gillian has found a calling as a Roofbreaker disability champion – moving along the ABC Journey of disability inclusion to 'C for Commission'. It is great to read Gillian's encouraging words below. Gillian writes:

"I feel as if I am a member of Through the Roof – that I am the Roofbreaker for this group in Highwoods. I am trying to support people in the community that I have made friends with due to having an understanding of disability, as I am disabled in quite a few ways. I try to listen and pray for people as this seems to help.

"At St Luke's church, we have a few disabled people that have different disabilities ranging from Mental Health, Autism and hearing impairment. We have had a [Disability Awareness Sunday] service to help support some disabled people who have been attending St Luke's church here in Colchester – that went very well.

"This gave us an opportunity to share our gifts and talents. We had Testimonies to share. This also gave us a chance as disabled people to learn how to express ourselves and build confidence."

Gillian took part in a Kingdom Storytellers workshop recently, to learn how to share her story of faith and disability in 90 seconds using a smartphone.



▲ Gillian, a disabled Roofbreaker, shares her story.

The workshop was run by Roofbreaker and Kingdom Storytellers founder, Jazz Shaban, who filmed Gillian's practice 'Photo story' live, and shared it, with Gillian's permission, on TTR and KS social media:

[https://youtu.be/xt6Tf\\_Fi2zE](https://youtu.be/xt6Tf_Fi2zE)

You can watch other video stories, including many Roofbreakers' stories (from Debbie, Gillian, Judy, Karen, Katie, Kereena, Louise, Lynda and Marisa) on the new Kingdom Storytellers website at

<https://kingdomstorytellers.org.uk/story-portal>

Let's share our journeys, listen to people's lived experience, and encourage each other.



▲ The girls fundraised with these cute craft creations.

## Save the date!

**In-person retreat on Wed 10th – Fri 12th Sept 2025** at High Leigh Conference Centre, Herts. **'Finding Hope through Disappointment'**, with pastors Neil & Sonya Chitty. Cost: £265 pp. See website, call, or email [together@throughtheroof.org](mailto:together@throughtheroof.org)

**Calvert Trust Activity Holiday on Mon 15th – Fri 19th June 2026** (Provisional dates only). See next issue.

## Crafting for the Cause: Young Creators Raise Funds for TTR

Melanie (13) and Bethany (10) recently turned their creativity into a force for good by raising funds for Through the Roof. Inspired to make a difference, the sisters got crafty, hand-making adorable wool pom-pom teddy key rings and colourful scoobie bracelets.

Melanie showcased their work online, offering custom-made items to friends and family, and the orders started rolling in! Every bracelet and key ring sold brought smiles not just to buyers, but to those helped by the girls' generous donation to Through the Roof.

A huge thank you to Melanie and Bethany for their big hearts and brilliant initiative!

Do you have a talent or hobby you could use to support the work? Whether it's baking, drawing, or crafting – your skills could help change lives.

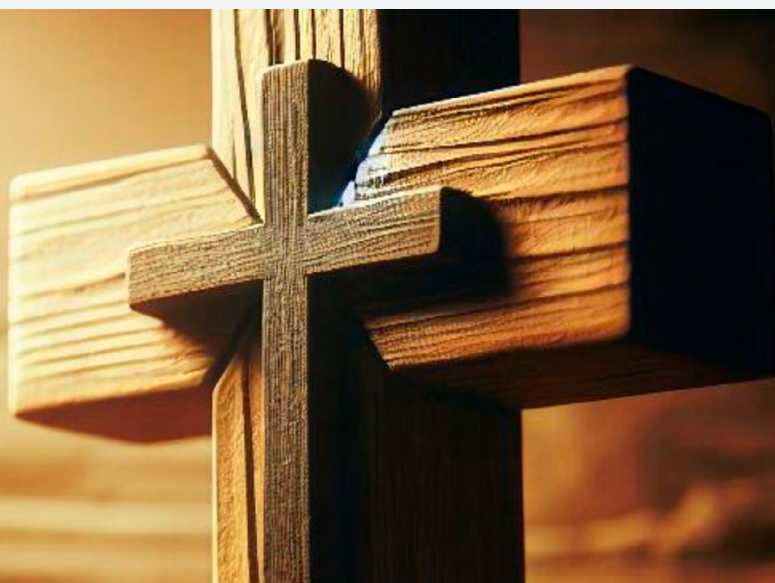
Get creative, get involved, and let's make a difference together!

# Centred on Jesus

**Our recent survey consulted about Through the Roof's future activities. The encouraging feedback from 68 people representing all areas of the charity's life will inform Trustees as they discern God's leading to plan ahead. Here are the key findings...**

Encouragingly, supporters identified our top strengths as being focused on three aspects: Jesus, People and our Purpose/Mission, exemplified by the following quotes: "I feel that Through the Roof is a family of people centred on Jesus and passionate about following the will of God"; "Small dedicated team focused on the purpose of the charity".

Although most people didn't highlight our weaknesses, a few themes were consistent. These were our: "Need to raise the profile and reach more individuals and churches with core message", alongside our 'Financial sustainability' – helpfully highlighted as: "I'd hate us to be too polite to point out to people that we need financial support to continue the good work!"



**88%** of respondents said they fully agree with our vision, and 89% fully support the mission statement. The following quote encapsulated people's sentiments: "In a world where disabled people often are passive recipients of services, it is uplifting to have an emphasis within TTR on the value of blessings being both received and given by disabled people".

**82%** of those who responded agreed our values match how we do things at TTR. One comment noticed us: "Refusing to cut corners where faith aspects are concerned".

**86%** of respondents fully agreed it was right to focus on our three strategic aims: Access, Belonging and Commission: "As Roofbreakers (we) find these are memorable and workable aims, which we readily share with others".

One key theme was overwhelmingly suggested as an opportunity: Equipping/mentoring summarised well by one response: "Equip more facilitators with lived experience of disability to build (their) confidence and competence to enable more participation". Others suggested: "Developing the skills of disabled adults" and "A mentorship programme".

Responding to: 'Where is God at work?' it's clear that God is using TTR to make a real difference, as highlighted by two people:

"You accept me. You talk to me. You value me. You support me. Jesus did the same with people who were socially excluded"; and, "In my life especially when I went to India when I was nearly 18. Changed my life!"

One insightful comment exhorts us to continue the work: "Please keep telling churches that, as disabled people, we can do things to enhance church life".

We finish with a lovely comment that echoes my gratitude..."Thank you to everyone involved with TTR for your hard work and commitment to the marginalised in society".

For a full report, email: [tim@throughtheroof.org](mailto:tim@throughtheroof.org)



**Access  
Belonging  
Commission**



# International missions



▲ Shaun speaking alongside a local partner in Jinja, Uganda.

## Wheels for the World trips

**Jinja, Uganda:** 10th–20th September 2025, Partner: Petra Foundation Christ Ministries

**Elburgon, Kenya:** 21st–31st January 2026, Partner: Abundant Hope of Glory Church

Contact: Kathy Birch [Kathy@throughtheroof.org](mailto:Kathy@throughtheroof.org) to apply or for information.

## International Roofbreaker trips

These Roofbreaker events below will be led in-country by East African volunteers:

**Kayonza, Rwanda:** 12th–15th August 2025, Partner: FH Rwanda

**Mozambique:** 15th–25th October 2025, (no UK team)  
Partner: Somos Nós

We ask for your prayers for these missions. See our social media for updates.

For more information, contact: [international@throughtheroof.org](mailto:international@throughtheroof.org)



▲ Shaun with Pastor Davis in Jinja, Uganda, 2024



▲ Shaun with Wheels volunteers, back in 2016!

## Thank you, Shaun!

After nearly ten years of faithful service to Through the Roof in the role of International Missions Manager, Shaun Burrows, is retiring from the role.

We are so grateful to Shaun for his gifts and everything he has brought to the work and charity. His local knowledge and experience of being a missionary in south and east Africa, together with his unwavering commitment to Christ and his gentle leadership style has left a healthy legacy on which the charity can continue to build.

Among many other things he has grown the work and made a real difference through building solid relationships with partners, empowering an excellent team of volunteers to run the warehouse and supporting new and existing volunteers to be team leaders for overseas trips.

One of our partners, Tarela of OIF Nigeria, commented: "Shaun kept telling me: 'You need to lead, and we will follow' and I felt like I've been empowered and encouraged and I've really grown – so thank you!"

Shaun will be greatly missed by everyone he has worked with, and we will be sad not to hear him telling one of his many humorous/inspiring/life-threatening/God-incidence stories.

Shaun hopes to join a team on a trip in future, but until then, he certainly won't be putting his feet up and resting. Shaun has taken on a role with his local church to develop the premises that the church recently purchased into a home for the church and a hub for the local community. He goes with our thanks and prayers for God's blessings in this new season.

We hope to bring you more on the new International Missions Manager in the next issue of Vital Link

## New International Missions Manager

We are delighted to have now completed the recruitment process. Thank you for your prayers. We believe God has brought the right person to the International Missions Manager role and are excited for them to start. As we went to press, we were nearing the end of the administrative formalities, so visit our social media channels and the next Vital Link for announcements.



# Enable Access, Belonging, Commission so disabled people can glorify God



**You can change lives and  
champion the ABC Journey  
of disability inclusion.**

**Your gift to Through the Roof can enable:**



**Access:** give wheelchairs so disabled people in developing nations can get to church



**Belonging:** support Christian fellowship through accessible retreats and groups



**Commission:** provide training to churches to fan into flame disabled people's giftings

Lolly in India was given a new wheelchair to serve in new ways...

**"We are so blessed to hear about Lolly's amazing life story and to share it.  
We hope it inspires others to keep persevering in adversity."**

Lolly's life is an example of the ABC Journey of Disability Inclusion. She was born very poor, in Kolkata, and got polio aged one. She was given Access to education by a local children's centre, and felt Belonging, there and in church. She was Commissioned as a social worker, and was invited by a Bishop to witness to 3000 people. Her wheelchair enables her to help many others.



Scan the QR code for our Just Giving page or visit [www.justgiving.com/ttr](http://www.justgiving.com/ttr) to donate directly and securely online – please state if donating for a specific purpose (in the Message box).



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

**Please return this form to:**

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



## Your details

Full name (inc. title): .....

Address: .....

.....

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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 at [www.throughtheroof.org](http://www.throughtheroof.org)

### I'd like to donate to:

(Please tick a box below to show your preference.)

☐ Where the need is greatest

☐ Wheels for the World

☐ 'Together' Fellowship

☐ UK Roofbreakers

We'd like to keep you informed on this good work.

### Tick here to receive our:

☐ Vital Link newsletter by email

☐ Vital Link newsletter by post

☐ International Mission newsletter (email)

☐ 'Together' newsletter (email)

## Gift aid

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

Please advise your full name, including title and middle names, together with your full address, in the 'Your Details' section (see top left) to allow us to apply for Gift Aid.

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

☐ on this donation

☐ in the past 4 years

☐ in the future

Please tick all boxes that you wish to apply then sign and date below.

or

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

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

\* 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.

**How to donate:** By cheque made out to Through the Roof • By bank transfer (BACS) to: **Through the Roof Charitable Trust**, sort code: **82-12-08**, Virgin Money account number: **20047444** (please use your name & the purpose of the donation as the reference) • By Credit Card (please complete details below)

☐ I enclose a cheque for £..... made out to Through the Roof

☐ I have sent my money by bank transfer, my reference is .....

☐ I would like to donate £..... by credit / debit card

Card number:

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

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

☐ I would like to make a regular donation of £..... to be used for .....

☐ I have set this up with my bank ☐ Please send me a form to enable me to do this.

☐ I do not require an acknowledgement for my donation

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