Mobility Worldwide®

Empowering People

Newsletter

Spring 2020

Liberian Affiliate is a GO!

Mobility Worldwide continues to expand its presence in West Africa as it moves forward on plans to open an affiliate in Liberia. A team of Mobility Worldwide representatives, headed by John Rudd, chair of the NGO's board of trustees, visited with officials of the Liberian United Methodist Conference to agree on details to move the effort forward. The shop will be located in Gbanga, Liberia where the Liberian Methodist Women's ministry has conducted several cart distributions through the years.

"We are on an aggressive path to expand outside the US as we strive to help 10-times as many people in the future as we do nowadays", according to John Rudd. "The Liberian Methodist Church has been a valued partner for many years and we are thankful that we can now take another even bigger step to help more people", he said.

Mobility Worldwide has provided the United Methodist Church in Liberia with hundreds of carts for nearly a decade. While these Mobility Carts were manufactured in the United States, in the future the carts will be assembled and eventually manufactured in Liberia using a locally based workforce.

Thousands of Liberians are in need of Mobility Carts which are ideal for environments where roads are in disrepair and sidewalks don't exist.

Many times, people trade-in convention wheelchairs for a more sturdy Mobility Cart.

12-year-old Frida of Liberia fits perfectly in her new Mobility Cart.

By establishing an affiliate in Liberia, Mobility Worldwide will be able to forgo shipping costs to the West African nation while employing those who are unable to walk.

"We are thankful that we can now take another even bigger step to help more people" John Rudd, Board Chr.

John Rudd (L), Chr., Board of Trustees, Mobility Worldwide and Liberia's Bishop Samuel J. Quire, Jr. (C) sign an MOU agreeing to work together in developing an affiliate in Ganta, Liberia as Scott Walters, MW's Executive Director looks on.

The Liberian Affiliate was of interest to the local media there.

Pull Carts: A Valued Assistive Device

The Pull Cart

It's common to see friends or family carrying their loved ones or pushing them along in a wheel barrow to get to the designated place where Mobility Carts are given to those in need. Many times a person's disability is so great that they are unable to use their arms or legs. It's during these instances that the Pull Cart shines.

Pull carts are ideal for those who don't have use of their legs or arms. Others can easily transport a person like this Vietnamese man who was wounded by a long forgotten landmine.

Most of the Pull Carts are made within the East Michigan Affiliate which is actually a group of several small manufacturing sites scattered throughout east and central Michigan including Linden, Ypsilanti, Marshall, Flushing White Lake Township and Goodrich.

"We have quite the creative team of volunteers", according to Jim McEwan, affiliate president. "Since we started to focus exclusively on making Pull Carts in 2007, we have averaged about 100 a year and now have made over 1,000 total. That's a great production record!"

The corps of volunteers, led by Jim McEwan, Ric Noll, Al Young, Leroy Oliver, Mark Thornton, and Dave Kauffman work independently and shuttle the cart parts among themselves as the end products come to life before they're loaded onto shipping containers with other Mobility Carts.

"Our Pull Carts don't get as much attention as the others, but when you see a family putting one to use for the first time, you know it becomes a cherished treasure immediately", according to David Kauffman.

Testing a New Resin Cart

Two friends in Haiti compare the more original Mobility Cart to a potential newer model.

Despite the ongoing public health emergency, the Research and Development Committee continues its work on testing the suitability of a molded resin cart. The R&D committee is using several ways to examine the resin cart including running the device using an "accelerated" test method on a treadmill stand to discover potential areas in need of improvement before field tests are performed.

In the next stage of the planning process, 250 molded resin carts are to be roto-molded at Step2 in Stow, OH and sent to locations in Africa, Central America and the Caribbean to test wear and tear in a more realistic setting.

"With each step of the testing plan, we were able to find areas where we could strengthen the cart which proves the value of the testing", said Andy Maynard, a retired mechanical engineer from 3M and current chair of the R&D committee.

"It will be interesting to see how well the resin carts perform in each of the different environments. We want to test as widely as possible so we are sure we have a durable, robust cart, or determine if we need to go back and make further improvements", he said.

The original schedule within the test plan has had to be changed due to the production slowdown caused by the COVID-19 outbreak. However, an in-depth progress report will be completed in time to share with attendees of the annual conference in Pella, IA this September.

A side-by-side look at the molded resin cart and the standard large Mobility Cart.

Improving MWW's Logistics

Mobility Worldwide is on its way to greatly improve the way we track inventory and forecast trends through careful planning and a good logistics system!

Cary Loesing, Director of Operations, is working closely with Christine Roberto of the Board of Trustees, in tailoring a cloud-based computer program to eventually tie all our affiliates together to increase the organization's efficiency.

"Ideally, it is best to have a minimum number of Mobility Carts in storage within our network of affiliates", Loesing said. "Then our volunteers know that their Mobility Carts are being provided to those in need or in transit."

Requests for carts continue to increase with more shipping containers being filled with carts from multiple affiliates which requires more attention to standardization and logistics.

In the coming months, a few affiliates have volunteered to directly enter their Mobility Cart production, inventory and distributions into Salesforce, the customer-relationship management service that is replacing the manual quarterly reporting system we have used in the past.

A reliable logistics program ensures Mobility Carts are delivered to where they are needed most.

"We're thankful to Christine for her expertise in leading the way in tailoring Salesforce specifically for the needs of Mobility Worldwide," Loesing stated. "It will be a key component in our effort to help 10 times as many people as we currently serve."

Annual Conference 2020: Yes or No?

By participating in Mobility Worldwide's Annual Conference, volunteers ensure that those in need are always happy customers.

The worldwide covid-19 health emergency has caused quite a disruption to everyone's calendar and of course Mobility Worldwide is no different. However, it's still too early to know whether or not it will cause an interruption to our plans to host our **Annual Conference in Pella, Iowa, September 24-26, 2020.**

As of this writing, plans are to move forward with the event which will take place at the Grace Fellowship Christian Church, 2497 Highway 163 E., Pella, Iowa 50219. This year's conference will be hosted by the volunteers from the nearby Leighton, IA Affiliate. Specific lodging information can be found on the website.

Let's all pray that things will settle down soon and we will have the opportunity to return to a sense of normalcy soon. We hope to see you in Iowa this September!

Bob Orscheln, CEO Orscheln Products.

Donor Impact: Orscheln Industries

For the past few years, Mobility Worldwide has been working to expand its presence in West Africa to bring the manufacturing process closer to the end user; the people who need the durability of a Mobility Cart. To achieve such a herculean effort, many things must line-up properly and at or near the top of the list is obtaining the financial resources to cover initial start-up expenses.

Orscheln Industries has helped MWW in its effort to expand in Africa thanks to the generosity of its foundation. For years, Orscheln Products has been kind enough to paint much of the steel parts needed to make Mobility Carts in the Columbia, MO affiliate. The organization took another great step by helping to formulate plans for Sierra Leone and help with some of the initial funding.

"It would have been impossible for us to open such a professional operation in Sierra Leone without the assistance of the Orscheln Foundation", according to Steve Baima, member of MWW's board of advisors. "Building infrastructure is an extremely important part of expanding into new markets and we knew right away that Bob Orscheln and his team understood that concept", Baima said.

MWW is blessed with many generous donors and sponsors who have helped us expand for over 25 years since our founding in 1994. Mobility Carts are hand-made at many locations throughout the USA and now Africa and given to those in need free of charge thanks to the help of donors.

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Vision:
End immobility in the world
Mission:
Mobility Worldwide seeks to reflect the love of God by bringing mobility & dignity to those in developing countries who are unable to walk.

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Mobility Worldwide, an initiative of PET Int'l, is a tax-exempt 501(C)(3) charity.
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MWW's Catalog of Products

As an organization, Mobility Worldwide has adopted an ambitious plan to help 10-times the number of people it serves every year. It will require a great deal of creativity to go from helping 7,000 people to as many as 70,000 annually in the years ahead. One way to achieve this is to expand the catalog of products available to people in need.

While a lot of excitement is building around the possibility of a molded resin cart, another way to help a larger number of people is to offer sets of crutches or walkers to people. Several affiliates have been doing this on and off for years, but now all affiliates are encouraged to give some thought to the idea. New or gently used crutches or walkers would greatly embellish shipments of Mobility Carts.

Some affiliates, like Mobility Worldwide Demotte, has been collecting walkers and crutches for some time including this large donation from the local Lions Club of Hebron.

Mobility Worldwide's mission is to "reflect the love of God by bringing mobility and dignity to those in developing countries who are unable to walk". We recognize that each person's needs and desires are different whereby one individual may want a Mobility Cart, another person might be better served with a walker.

The catalog of products available to those we help continues to expand as more and more options present themselves thanks to the ingenuity of our volunteers and the generosity of our donors.