



# CANADIAN FOUNDATION **WHEELCHAIR**

## FONDATION CHAISE ROULANTE CANADA

A Global Wheelchair Mission Partner

*Transforming Lives Through Mobility*

Newsletter 6 Summer 2011



Past State Deputy Larry Kustra  
State Secretary Merlyn Onyshuk

*Faith, Hope and Charity*



**KNIGHTS  
OF COLUMBUS**  
IN SERVICE TO ONE. IN SERVICE TO ALL.



## FROM THE DIRECTOR... Notes from the Office



On my way to the airport in Havana after an emotional and busy week I passed by the famous old 'Cemetario Cristobál Colón' and its main gate. On it my eyes caught a beautiful statue of the three Graces: Faith, Hope and Charity. How very fitting.

During the year, working with the Knights of Columbus across Canada and in some of the receiving countries, such as Cuba, we certainly experience these graces all the time. Sometimes as expected, by representatives of our local partner organizations such as Caritas, who go enormously out of their way to help all those with physical and other disabilities. Sometimes as unexpected, as the touching moment a local volunteer sees the need to change an elderly gentleman's diaper and – just does it so that he can be placed comfortably in his brand-new wheelchair.

It is a privilege working with the 'Knights in Action', being charitable, working to better peoples' lives with faith in the lasting impact of every single wheelchair, giving hope for a better future to others, and in the process reaffirming **Faith, Hope and Charity** in ourselves.

Many lives have been touched and changed by the three graces with the help of the Knights of Columbus.

With thanks and much appreciation,  
**Christiana Flessner**  
*Executive Director*



**CUBA** Sunshine and  
Warm People



In March 2011, Immediate Past State Deputy Larry Kustra and his wife Margaret, State Secretary Merlyn Onyschuk and Grand Knight Ted Sobieski left -10 degree temperatures and snow behind to be greeted by the warm Cuban sun and warm smiles from old friends.

They returned to Cuba with the Canadian Wheelchair Foundation to visit Cuban brother Knights, to contact previous and to meet new recipients, – delivering mobility, independence and hope in Havana and Camagüey.

A standing ovation and a song greeted the small group at the Convento de Belen, a government-operated community centre in Old Havana, which provides a wide array of support programs for seniors. It was wonderful to see some of the recipients from last year using their wheelchairs to take part in vibrant community life. The sparks of recognition and faith in peoples' eyes will stay in everyone's hearts.



The Knights truly were 'in Action', taking the wheelchairs out of their boxes right in the Old Havana Harbour, carrying them down streets, up narrow staircases, adjusting footrests and most of all shaking hands and enjoying smiles and gratitude from all.

The highlight of this visit to Cuba was again the great hospitality at the early 18th century seminary of Camagüey and working side by side with the local Knights, delivering wheelchairs into homes across the beautiful historic town.



Under the smiling eyes of Our Lady of Charity in the seminary courtyard we struggled to say goodbye early the next morning, but parted with faith to see each other again, – faith that our common purpose will connect across the distance and faith that with every wheelchair delivered whole families' lives will be easier and with hope for a better future.

...faith

[www.cdnwheelchair.ca](http://www.cdnwheelchair.ca)





## VIETNAM Joining Hands and Hearts

Although it is at the other end of the world, Vietnam has strong bonds to North America. In the immediate time following the end of the Vietnam War in 1975 Canada has become home to well over 100,000 of Vietnam's refugees. They have grown roots, raised their families and joined their new communities. Most of them stay in touch with family members left behind and give freely to help whichever way they can.

In February 2011, Knights of Columbus from various States across North America joined Michael Yeo, State Deputy of BC/Yukon who had initiated this shipment of wheelchairs, and his parish priest Father Tien Tran on his annual visit back to Vietnam during which he helps organize medical missions in rural areas. *(Please, see note below)*

Having a common purpose and spirit of the heart made it easy for the two teams to join, everyone helping out where they could, such as holding the flashlight for the dentist or counting and labelling medication in the portable pharmacy. Every village, every new day brought long lines of waiting patients, happy hopeful faces when the team's bus rolled in and many helping hands to unload and quickly set up the mobile clinic. Adding the delivery of wheelchairs was a very welcome new component, a new way of helping those who otherwise could not be helped.



Traveling along narrow country roads surrounded by people moving about their daily lives on motorcycles, the team saw signs of faith everywhere, statues of Buddha and churches side by side. For much of Vietnamese history Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism have strongly influenced the religious and cultural life of its people. Christianity was introduced first by the Portuguese and the Dutch traders in the 16th and 17th centuries, then furthered by French missionaries in the 19th and 20th centuries. Currently, six million Roman Catholics practice their faith actively and with great devotion. Many men are looking forward to joining the Knights of Columbus.

Previous shipments of wheelchairs by the Knights of Saskatchewan to Vietnam have already included deliveries at the Cathedral in Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon). So what better way to end this first personal delivery of mobility by Knights in Vietnam, than by being in the very same place, attending mass, jointly lifting people up off the floor and sharing a meal with the beaming new wheelchair owners, looking into their future with new hope.

**Note:** *Medical Aid for Vietnam* was founded by Dr. David Neima, Dr. Hugh Parsons and Rev. Tien Tran in 1994 in Vancouver, Canada. Its purpose is to work with local doctors, clinics and hospitals to help the poor, the sick and the disabled children of Vietnam.



## Wheelchairs Delivered and Committed To Date

CONTAINER TO	WHEELCHAIRS
Afghanistan	1,700
American Samoa	240
Antigua	280
Argentina	280
Bolivia	80
Canada	560
Chile	940
China	387
Colombia	560
Costa Rica	130
Cuba	898
Dominican Republic	670
Ecuador	560
El Salvador	1,400
Ethiopia	540
Fiji	140
Haiti	100
Iraq	280
Jamaica	280
Kazakhstan	280
Kenya	560
Lithuania	560
Mexico	10,500
Nepal	540
Panama	2,240
Peru	340
Philippines	950
Rwanda	280
Sierra Leone	670
South Africa	560
Sri Lanka	280
Tajikistan	240
USA	110
Venezuela	280
Vietnam	950
Zambia	560

**TOTAL TO DATE: 29,925**



## Merci and Thank You

To **Herb Yang, State Program Director – BC/Yukon** for participating in the BMO Vancouver International Marathon, raising funds to sponsor wheelchairs

To **St. Martin of Tours Council 14462 – McLennan / High Prairie, AB** for running an annual Fishing Derby for families, raising funds for wheelchairs and raising awareness of the Knights in their community **Note: 3rd Annual Derby is slated for Sat. June 11, 2011**

To **St. Andrew Kim Council 14110, BC and to Dominic Woo** for hosting a wonderful "Memories of Europe" Violin concert, raising funds for a whole 110 wheelchair container

To **Lake Lenore School, SK** for dedicating their Christmas Season fundraising campaign in lieu of exchanging presents at the school to help out those in need of wheelchairs

To **Notre Dame, Selkirk, MB, Catechism Program** for hosting a delicious Pasta Luncheon for wheelchairs for the less fortunate

To **École Ste-Anne Immersion, MB** for dedicating their Spirit Week activities to raise funds for the Knights of Columbus Ste. Anne Council 4819 wheelchair campaign



**CANADIAN FOUNDATION WHEELCHAIR**  
**FONDATION CHAISE ROULANTE CANADA**

Post Office Box 75038, White Rock,  
BC, CANADA V4B 5L3

Tel (604) 536-2022 • Toll Free (866) 666-2411 • Fax (604) 536-9831  
e-mail: [info@cdnwheelchair.ca](mailto:info@cdnwheelchair.ca)

[www.cdnwheelchair.ca](http://www.cdnwheelchair.ca)

*..dignity ..freedom ..hope..*