

WHEELCHAIR PROGRAM

One of the founding principles of the Knights of Columbus, (established in 1882 as a fraternal benefit society) charity has always been an important part of life for Knights. But since joining the global mission of delivering wheelchairs in 2003, Knights are extending their charitable efforts across international borders and changing lives with the gift of mobility.

The Knights of Columbus and The Global Wheelchair Mission have teamed up to help bring wheelchairs to those who lack freedom of mobility.

Since 2003, the Knights of Columbus has funded the delivery of tens of thousands of wheelchairs around the world, and right here at home. Thousands of veterans and their families across the United States in need of wheelchairs have received new mobility, and honor the Knights with their thanks and prayers.

Since 2007, Knights across the U.S. have been having “Wheelchair Sunday” parish drives to raise funds for the delivery of wheelchairs. Beginning with Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Pasadena, California where Fr. Gerrard O’Brien coined the phrase “Wheelchair Sunday,” this program has spread to several states and is catching on quickly.

The first 5 parish drives in Southern California raised enough money to sponsor the delivery of 1,000 brand new wheelchairs and added more than 150 new Knights to the local membership.

Knights and their families are getting involved in a hands on life changing mission that allows children, teens and adults around the world to have their prayers answered with the gift of hope, freedom, dignity, independence...a wheelchair!

A wheelchair changes the lives of entire families and on average 10 people's lives are directly impacted in a positive way with the gift of each wheelchair. We have changed millions of lives – but much remains to be done. An estimated 100 million people around the world are in need of a wheelchair. Less than 1 percent own or have access to one.

For every donation of \$150 we send to the Global Wheelchair Mission, it can deliver a brand new wheelchair which would cost over \$500 in a medical supply store. They are shipped by 110 to 280 wheelchair containers directly from the factory to the destination countries at no cost to the recipients.

The Global Wheelchair Association purchases wheelchairs in bulk and delivers them by sea containers around the world.

While I was preparing this presentation, I was asked what my goals are for this year:

My Goals

Getting all 147 councils involved

Hold “Wheelchair Sunday” in as many parishes as possible

Do a “Wheelchair Sunday” at the three centers of our faith here in Washington; Seattle, Spokane and Yakima.

I want to close with these points:

We are a state with 147 councils and 16,800 plus members and still growing.

Turn this program over to your COMMUNITY chairman and just imagine what 147 Community Chairman can do!

This program is **not** an annual event culminating at the State Convention. As soon as you can make a donation, please do so. Your donations need to be sent to the State Secretary, Don McBride. Global Wheelchair Mission is a 501(c) (3) tax-exempt organization.

As soon as \$16,500 is raised, we can purchase our first cargo container of 110 wheelchairs. If every council purchased 1 wheelchair to start our program, we would raise \$22,050. That would enable us to purchase our first container and have a balance toward our next container. It has been suggested that our first container come to the State of Washington for our veterans and retired religious.

Don't forget the side effect of this program, increased council membership. When you do the "Wheelchair Sunday" or other fund raisers, please be prepared with form 100's.

TO ENSURE A SUCCESSFUL
“WHEELCHAIR SUNDAY”
PARISH DRIVE

- 1) Meet with the Pastor, show him the “Wheelchair Sunday” video, and gain his approval.
 - a. Presentation of about 12 minutes will be made during/as the Homily.
 - b. There will be a brief 1.5 minute video shown in church as part of the presentation.
 - c. Request approval for a second collection. If this is not ok, we can collect at the doors of church after Mass.
 - d. Collections will be taken with the American Wheelchair Mission and a report will be provided to the church and the State Wheelchair Chairman.
 - e. Ask Pastor for two or three dates that will work for his and the church's schedule.

- 2) Contact Dan Moberg with the American Wheelchair Mission and see if the dates are available on his schedule.
- 3) Confirm the date that is best with the Pastor and schedule the event on the church calendar.
- 4) Six weeks before the event, start placing announcements in the church bulletin.
- 5) Three weeks before the event:
 - a. Start making verbal announcements at Mass.
 - b. Confirm with the Pastor that the celebrants for the “Wheelchair Sunday” weekend are informed that the Wheelchair Mission will be making a presentation during/as the homily.
 - c. Invite the State Deputy, State Officers, DD, Field Agent, surrounding Grand Knights to the event.
 - d. Ensure council support. Manpower needs: Setup a about 3 PM on Saturday, take down after the last Mass on Sunday, help with the second collections, or receipt of donations after Mass and help with membership inquires.
- 6) Evaluate the audio/visual availability at the church
 - a. What projection equipment is available?
 - b. Where will the video be projected?
 - c. On what will the video be projected?
 - d. Are hand-held wireless microphone(s) available?
 - e. If projection/screen equipment is not available, is the Council willing to provide it?
 - f. Report on all of this to Dan Moberg of the American Wheelchair Mission.
- 7) The weekend of:
 - a. American Wheelchair Mission will arrive at the church at about 3 pm on Saturday.
 - b. Tables (2 or 3) should be set up outside the main entrance of the church.

- c. Membership materials should be available on one of the tables.
- d. Council members (in council shirts or at least with badges) should be available.
- e. American Wheelchair Mission would like to meet with Pastor and celebrants of each mass.

That's about it for the Wheelchair Sunday process. It looks like a lot but we have included details. Once you have the Pastor's approval, the actual event is easier than a pancake breakfast! American Wheelchair Mission really does much of the work.

As far as regular donation, it would be very helpful if American Wheelchair Mission could receive donor information regardless of the size of their gift. They maintain a database on all donors so that they can send out quarterly newsletters.

John Rowley, PGK, PFN, FDD
State Wheelchair Program Chairman
Council@kofc-wa-org