

District Grant P-50: Wheelchair Project in Costa Rica

In Costa Rica there is a huge and increasing need for wheelchairs for peoples of all ages. The country's dramatic increase in life expectancy has created a large population of senior citizens prone to cardiovascular diseases, cancer and Alzheimer, among other illnesses. A high incidence of traffic accidents and other factors have resulted in an extraordinary growth of wheelchair users of all ages. A wheelchair obviously provides mobility and improves self-sufficiency for these patients, a crucial aspect in the treatment and amelioration of their condition.

The original intent of this \$9000 grant was to establish a program to repair a substantial number of wheelchairs each month. For this purpose, La Mesa Sunrise Rotary established a partnership with the San Pedro and Curridabat Rotary in San Jose, Costa Rica (Club 7206, District 4240) and with "Taller Hogar Calasanz, a Catholic organization that would have provided training for young interns, as well as the equipment and physical space for the repair. Unfortunately, due to financial constraints, the "Hogar" withdrew its support for the project. This development forced both Rotary Clubs to move in another direction, after securing the authorization of our District authorities.

La Mesa Sunrise committed \$3500 for this project, supplemented by \$2500 in DDF, and \$3000 from the San Pedro and Curridabat Rotary. Kipping in mind our common goal of helping patients with an urgent need for wheelchairs the funds were used to purchase a total of **58 standard wheelchairs** to be distributed among **8 different organizations** (7 of which received 5 wheelchairs each, and one received 4 wheelchairs, for a total of 44; 14 low income patients with urgent need of a wheelchair received one each.) Each of these organizations was carefully selected by the local Rotary club. All of them are accredited institutions, with a strong record of volunteer work and community service.

Notable among these organizations was the "Centro de Discapacitados de Guápiles" (Center for Disable Patients in Guápiles), which cares for severely handicapped children; several centers for palliative care in San José and Cartago, and Day Care centers for the elderly. Most of them are located in the area of service for the local Rotary club. Each of them became the owners of the wheelchairs. They will lend the wheelchairs to their patients; the patients' families sign an agreement to return the wheelchairs when no longer needed and the institutions will assign them to other patients. This way, the program will be sustainable for a number of years.

-Matching Grant P-50. From Wheelchair Repair to Wheelchair Donations

-Contributors:	La Mesa Sunrise Rotary	\$3500
	Rotary District 5340	\$2500
	Club Rotario San Pedro/Curridabat	\$3000
	Total:	\$9000
		(Colones: 4.455.000)

Two Purchases:

Invoice No. 0037, 11-01-2012 (9 wheelchairs) 694.620 Colones

Invoice No. 0052, 11-16-2012 (49 chairs) 3.781.820 Colones.

Total Purchase: 58 Standard Wheelchairs Total: 4.476.440 Colones *e 495 Colones*
Average per Unit: *per \$1 = \$9043.00*

Donations: In order to benefit the largest number of patients in need of wheelchairs, our preference was to donate to accredited institutions with a good record of service to the communities and volunteer work. These institutions will lend the Wheelchairs to their patients, and will take them back after the patient dies or when the wheelchairs are no longer needed, and then assign it to another patient. We personally visited most of these institutions. Some of the wheelchairs will be donated to low-income patients in urgent need of wheelchairs, all identified by the San Pedro/Curridabat Rotary.

Four Club members traveled to Costa Rica: Manuela Bump-Murillo; John Marambio, Joann Bergquist, and Hugo Murillo to work in this project on November 26, 2012, an all-day long affair. Club President Hugo Murillo made the last delivery on December 3, 2012.

Institutions:

- Centro de Discapacitados de Guapiles (Center for Disabled Patients in Guapiles) – ¹⁰ wheelchairs
- Hogar de Ancianos de Lourdes de Montes de Oca (Center for Senior Citizens in Lourdes de Montes de Oca) – 5 wheelchairs
- Centro Diurno y Hogar de Ancianos de Curridabat (Day Center and Home for Senior Citizens in Curridabat) 5 wheelchairs
- Comision Pastoral de la Salud para Cuidados Paliativos de Tres Rios (Center for Palliative Care in Tres Rios. 5 wheelchairs
- ASOCAPA. Asociacion de Cuidados Paliativos Cartago (Center for Palliative Care Max Peralta Hospital, Cartago) 5 wheelchairs
- Asociacion Cartaginesa Amigos Club Rotario (Cartago Association Friends of Rotary) 5 Wheelchairs
- Asociacion Carita Salesiana (Carita Salesiana Association) 5 wheelchairs
- Asociacion de Atencion del Paciente de Cuidados Terminales Caminemos Juntos (Association for the Care of Terminal Patients, Let's Walk Together), 4 wheelchairs

TOTAL: 44

- Pacientes Individuales de bajos recursos (Low Income Patients with urgent need of wheelchairs selected by the San Pedro/Curridabat Rotary) 14 wheelchairs.