

THE MISSION: Provide wheelchairs to individuals who do not qualify for other assistance, and who could not obtain such equipment without financial aid.

Assisting Dr. Garcia

On May 8, 2010 we had the privilege of meeting someone with a very unique and inspiring background that needed a little bit of help. A gifted individual, Dr. Becky Garcia graduated from Onsted High School, and just three weeks later graduated from the University of Michigan and entered their medical school. She finished medical school quickly, completed her internship, and became chief of staff at a Miami emergency room for many years. Becky also started a free clinic, and saw patients from 7:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m. one day a week. She made a difference in the lives of many!

In 2002 things changed dramatically. While Christmas shopping, Becky had left a store to cross a street when suddenly a motorist ran the red light hitting her in the crosswalk. She was dragged 50 feet and had to have the hospital's medevac helicopter take her to the emergency room where her own staff saved her life. Her 14 month hospital visit wasn't easy as she dealt with complications like blood clots, that impaired her vision, and a flair up of Lupus, which had always been under control before the accident. After the accident Becky moved back home to Michigan and currently lives in Hillsdale with family nearby.

Now, eight years since the accident, Becky needed a new wheelchair but her insurance company would not provide one for another year and a half. We had a nearly brand new lightweight manual wheelchair in our warehouse that met her needs and arranged to have George and his wife Gail deliver the wheelchair on their way to see their daughter at Hillsdale College. Becky was thrilled! Two weeks later, on a follow-up visit, George and our board president Don Kern learned that what Becky really needed was a power wheelchair or scooter so she could get out independently and visit downtown Hillsdale, just a few blocks away. Becky couldn't bring herself to ask for help with something so expensive. Thankfully we continue to receive donations of new and gently used mobility equipment and we had a power wheelchair that was in excellent condition for Becky to use. In June George and Don made the third trip to Hillsdale to deliver the chair and spend time with Becky. Again, Becky was more than appreciative and thanked everyone at Alternatives in Motion for giving her an opportunity get her life back in motion!



Executive Director, George Ranville, with Dr. Becky Garcia at her home in Hillsdale, MI

Who Do We Help?

Becky's story is a perfect example of the diverse backgrounds of the individuals seeking our assistance each year. While the majority of our recipients have ongoing health issues or physical disabilities they have faced for many years, many did not imagine at the beginning of 2010 that they would see the need for mobility assistance by year's end. Each situation is different and often complex, but the people we help could be someone born with a disability, your elderly neighbor, a co-worker battling illness, your brother-in-law who needed temporary assistance after a knee replacement surgery, or a relative visiting friends and family from out of town.

Having a disability can be expensive and we firmly believe everyone should have the opportunity to participate in society and not be limited by mobility issues. Your continued financial support has allowed us to assist over 100 individuals this year! Thank you for giving the Gift of Mobility!



Mobility in Matamoros Mexico

While the majority of our recipients reside in Michigan, we have helped individuals in 17 other states and on rare occasions assisted individuals in other countries. We know first hand from the phone calls we receive each day there is significant need for mobility assistance right here in our own state and we focus our efforts on meeting that need.

Occasionally we are approached by other nonprofit organizations who ask for assistance in collecting used mobility equipment to be sent to other countries. This summer we had the wonderful opportunity to partner with the nonprofit orphanage of Ciudad De Los Niños De Matamoros, or City of the Children of Matamoros.

In July one of our board members notified us that his friend John Shinsky, an Alternatives in Motion supporter, was looking for manual wheelchairs to ship to an orphanage he opened in Mexico. Our staff had recently received a donation of 10 older manual wheelchairs that were below our standards for placing with individuals here in the United States. The orphanage was grateful for any assistance we could provide regardless of the condition of the chairs so we reviewed our wheelchair inventory and were able to load 11 manual wheelchairs onto a charter bus that departed for Mexico on August 5, 2010. In October we received the following letter and amazing photographs from John Shinsky:



John Shinsky with the Mayor's wife

Dear George & Matt:

Larry Spencer told me that you two were the ones who arranged for me to take wheelchairs to Mexico. I want to express my sincere appreciation for your donation of wheelchairs for people in need in Matamoros Mexico. I had the privilege of handing out the wheelchairs with the Mayor's wife in Matamoros Mexico. Several people from the community came to receive the chairs. It was a very touching experience to see people ranging from children to the elderly who had severe physical needs, finding the best way possible to get to our location to receive their own special wheelchair. They were so appreciative for the gift of mobility, because they struggle each day to get around their community the best way they can.

Your kindness has made a significant difference in the lives of those in need. I have attached a few pictures to give you an idea of the value of your donation. Thank you so much for kindness, generosity, and genuine care for others.

With Sincere Appreciation,

John Shinsky, Project Leader

The City of Children of Matamoros Orphanage Project

www.shinskyorphanage.org



Hit & Run Victim Gets Twice The Help

Frequently we are called upon by our local wheelchair equipment vendors to provide loaner wheelchairs for clients while they go through the process of obtaining equipment through their individual insurance providers. In this situation we are happy to help out because we value a person's mobility and know what it's like to not have a reliable set of wheels. Again this year we have helped multiple people who needed temporary mobility solutions. Some of these individuals borrowed a wheelchair from Alternatives in Motion for as little as a day or two, while others kept their equipment for several months until a new chair was provided.

Andrew Iciek was one of the individuals who needed some long-term assistance and we were happy to help him out. While waiting for his new power wheelchair to be approved through his insurance company we provided him with a loaner wheelchair to use free of charge. The chair allowed him to finish requirements needed to complete his Master's degree through Wayne State University. Andrew was incredibly grateful for the loaner chair and wrote a letter of support for Alternatives in Motion to receive the WOOD TV Connecting With Community Award in the spring of 2010.

In September Andrew was a victim of a hit and run auto accident and he called our office to apologize for the wheelchair being broken. Our first concern was not about the wheelchair but to make sure Andrew was okay, which thankfully he only received a few scratches. Our next concern was to get Andrew another wheelchair so he can continue living his active and independent lifestyle. By the end of the week we had delivered a second power wheelchair for Andrew to use for as long as he needed it. Andrew finally received a brand new power wheelchair through his insurance company in November and returned our loaner so we can use it again for another recipient. Andrew also completed his Master's degree and has offered to volunteer for Alternatives in Motion while he looks for work. About the experience he said, "Alternatives in Motion is a great organization who really cares about helping people so they can function in their daily life. They really do go above and beyond when it comes to customer care! They are the people I go to when I have problems, and I recommend them very highly!"



Andrew, in the first loaner wheelchair we provided in January 2010

Volunteer Spotlight:

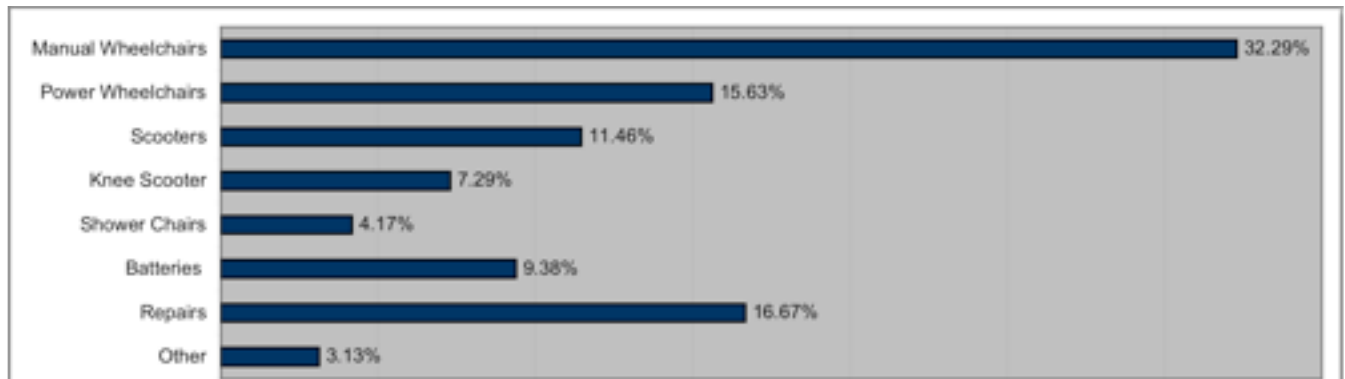


“I volunteered at Alternatives in Motion during the summer of 2010. Working with wheelchairs had been something that I had very little experience with, and I felt that learning a little more about them would help me out in the future as a physical therapist. At first, I started working on dismantling used wheelchairs, a tedious process that usually took about three to six hours per chair. This is an important job because many of the replacement parts AIM uses originate from donated wheelchairs no longer suitable for placement. Several times a day, Matt would come down to the warehouse looking for a replacement part for someone in need. This is truly a process of trial and error, as all wheelchairs are slightly different, and can consume a great amount of time for one small part. Subsequently, I had the privilege of going on several wheelchair placements. These were heartwarming experiences because when the people received their wheelchair, many of them were more than ready to go and explore the world around them! The best part of Alternatives in Motion is that they are constantly thinking of ideas of how to reach more people.”

~ Johnathan Wismer: Logged 77 Volunteer Hours at Alternatives in Motion

Alternatives in Motion: By the Numbers

2010 Equipment Placements & Assistance by Percentages



Just like anything with moving parts, a wheelchair needs repair and maintenance to keep going. When an individual's wheelchair is not working, their freedom and independence become abruptly limited. More than 25% of the people Alternatives in Motion assisted this year were in need of repairs or maintenance for their wheelchairs.

Below are some common repair and maintenance needs required to keep moving people forward:

- Flat tires or worn tires repaired/replaced
- Controllers or joystick repair/replacement
- Charger replacement
- Programming adjustments made to customize wheelchair to users needs and abilities
- Battery replacements

Did You Know?

Most power wheelchairs and scooters take two batteries. Depending on the chair, a pair of batteries can range in price from \$140-\$450 and under every day use need to be replaced once a year. As we continue to place more power wheelchairs and scooters, our need for funds to purchase batteries increases significantly each year. Your donation, of ANY amount, goes a long way to helping keep our recipients mobile!

2010 Wish List:

Below is a list items we are in need of to assist with our day to day operations. All donations are tax-deductible. Please call (616) 493-2620 if you have an item you would like donate. Thank you for your support!

- Used Van w/ Wheelchair Ramp or Power Lift in Good Condition
- Master Appliance Butane Solder Iron (UltraTorch, UT-100SI)
- Cordless Electric Drill
- Screw Driver Set
- Cleaning Supplies. (Disinfectant, brushes, magic erasers, rags, etc.)
- Compact Electric Upholstery Cleaner
- (2) New or Gently Used MacBook Pro Laptop or iMac Desktop Computers
- (1) New or Gently Used Laptop or Desktop Running Microsoft Windows XP Professional or Windows Live (2007 or newer)
- Microsoft Office Professional 2010
- Multi Line Small Business Phone System (Call for more information)



Elizabeth Shooks, with her husband and
AIM volunteer Kyle Spieker.
April 2010 Recipient