



**Eleanore's Project, Inc.
Board of Directors**

Tamara Kittelson-Aldred, Co-chair

Rick Aldred,
Co-chair

Chris Clasby

**Jami Romney
FitzGerald**

Sarag Mulligan

Leslie Scott

Richard Stepan

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Contact us!

501 E. Central Ave.
Missoula, MT 59801
USA

406.370.4717

info@eleanoresproject.org
www.eleanoresproject.org

Eleanore's Project, Inc. is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit private operating foundation.

Greetings

Eleanore's Project celebrated its second birthday on August 2, 2006, and one month later we were in the midst of our first wheelchair expedition to Jordan. We have been home about one month as I write this and the impressions are still very fresh (please read more in the article written by Ar-

wen). Despite differences of language, religion, culture, geography and climate, we shared much in common with the families of children with disabilities and the Jordanian professionals who work with them. The children themselves taught us much, and I hope you can visit the Jordan photo gallery on our new website to see some of their beautiful

faces. As in Peru, we saw how issues surrounding life with disabilities forge a unique bond requiring nothing more than open hearts and willingness to spend time together in common concern for those who appear so vulnerable, yet possess such strength.

~ Tamara

Extra Help for Eleanore's Project

We are happy to announce that Arwen is back from the Peace Corps, and working part-time for Eleanore's Project during her transition back to America. Prior to attending graduate school next fall, she is providing much needed organizational and coordination

help and writing protocols for what she is doing. These will be tested and refined before, during and after our next expedition to Peru in March. This will provide structure to make it possible for interns or volunteers to more easily help with organizational and coordi-

nation tasks in the future – a tremendous help for Tamara. We want to thank the Buuck Family Foundation for their generosity in giving us a grant designated for operating expenses, which is supporting Arwen's work.

Jordan Expedition: Letter from Arwen



The Eleanore's Project Expedition to Jordan

began more than a year ago. I am Eleanore Kittelson-Aldred's older sister and in the summer of 2004, I had just joined the Peace Corps and prepared to leave Montana for the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Eleanore's Project, Inc., was just be-

ginning as I left home, and although I was disappointed that it wasn't logistically feasible for me to be involved in our work in Peru, I was determined to be as involved as I could be.

Over the course of my first year in Jordan, I began to see an alarming need for specialized wheelchairs throughout the Kingdom. As I went around to small villages, visiting my fellow Peace Corps Volunteers, I

heard stories of children who had never left their homes, who lived on their mattresses on the floor and were completely dependent on their families for everything.

The more I saw, the more I became convinced that Jordan was the ideal place for Eleanore's Project to become involved – after all, I spoke Arabic, had

Upcoming Events

Joyous Party

The second Joyous Party will take place at a Carousel for Missoula on December 1, 2006 from 4 to 7:30 PM; we hope this will continue as an annual event. There will again be free carousel rides and refreshments, art by Odette Grassi, and a Giving Tree for wheelchair sponsorships. There will be opportunities to see pictures and hear stories about disability needs in developing countries, with details about Peru and Jordan. A special attraction will be a visit from Monte, the mascot for the University of Montana Grizzlies – there are sure to be surprises with him around! If you live in the Missoula area, please plan to join us for fun for all ages and a chance to share from the abundance we have in North America.

Quilt Raffle

“Eleanore’s Ride” is a gorgeous prize winning quilt created by Vickie Peterson Rubie, and donated to Eleanore’s Project as a fund raiser. It will be on display at the Joyous Party and at other venues around Missoula over the coming months. It can also be viewed on our website, where the zoom feature actually shows some of its amazing detail. Raffle tickets are \$1 each or \$5 for 6 tickets. We will gladly ship the quilt if it is won by a lucky person outside the Missoula area. 100% of the funds raised by this quilt will be used for direct wheelchair services for children.

Peru 2007 Expedition

The spring 2006 expedition for “Tito’s Kids” was delayed by cir-

cumstances beyond our control, but is now back in the works for March 2007. We are hoping to expand what we had planned to provide, by including wheelchairs for children identified by Equip K.I.D.S. in the Cusco and Arequipa areas as well as five venues in Lima. We are anxious to see our Peruvian friends again, meet new kids and families, and provide follow-up for chairs provided earlier.

Jordan 2007 Expedition

Before we even left the country, referrals for more custom wheelchairs were coming our way and we agreed to return in 2007. Application forms with measurements are coming in, and we are working on raising funds for wheelchair sponsorships together with our partners in Jordan.

Meet our new Board Members!

We are pleased to introduce you to our new board members. Two of them replace Fran Coover, who left to pursue other commitments in April, and Erin Greytak, who moved to Washington to start graduate school this fall. Thank you Fran and Erin!! Sarah Mulligan continues on the board with Tamara and Rick and the following individuals:

Richard Stepan has worked with pediatric rehabilitation equipment in many different capacities for over 35 years, as a dealer, sales representative and for the Montana Adaptive Equipment Program. Plus he was Eleanore’s wheelchair guy for a long time! Dick is a veteran of many international wheelchair distribution trips in several countries and has a wealth of experience to share. We are so glad he joined us! He is serving as president of the board.

Chris Clasby is a social worker with 16 years personal experience using power chairs and adaptive technology. He works at the Rural Institute on Disabilities at the University of Montana. A native Montanan, he has participated in many community, social, and governmental programs in related areas. His interest in Eleanore’s Project was sparked after hearing one of our presentations; he wants to help individuals without the advantages that we enjoy in the United States. Chris is vice-president of the board.

Leslie Scott is a part-time pediatrician at Missoula Valley Pediatrics and home school mom to 2 kids: Katy and Sam. Married to Dane, Director of the Center for Ethics at The University of Montana, she has a long term interest in health care for the underserved,

especially in developing countries. So it was a natural fit to become involved with Eleanore’s Project! She and Sarah are sharing the role of board secretary.

Jami Romney FitzGerald has a degree in Psychology, Human Development and Early Intervention, and worked for the Child Development Center for 13 years providing home-based early intervention services for families with children with special needs. Jami met Eleanore as a 9 month old while teaching her sister Julian swim lessons, eventually finagling her way into our home as a Family Support Specialist. She is currently a consultant with the Deaf-Blind Transition Initiative, the mother of two darling boys and we are thrilled she has joined our board.

Update on Ghassan

The first time that we met Ghassan, he was inching his way across the floor in his home independently, but with a terribly deformed back. His mother shared with my family the story of her life since his birth – he was her first child, and her husband deserted her when he was born and it was clear that he had disabilities. She was clearly in a



Ghassan on his custom mattress

somewhat desperate situation, and told us that he had not been able to leave the house in a long time because at age 13, he was too big for her to be able to carry alone.

All four of us were very touched by her story, and we promised her that we would do everything possible to make her life and that of Ghassan easier. This was nearly a year and a half ago, and we were in the beginning stages of planning the Eleanore's Project Jordan expedition.

In September of 2006, Eleanore's Project Jordan became a reality, and we were finally able to make good on our promise to Ghassan and his mother. They came to the distribution in Irbid (in northern Jordan), and our team of therapists not only fit a specialized chair for Ghassan, but also manufactured a foam sleeping mattress. Because of his deformed back, he had not been able to sleep comfortably for some time, which meant that his mother never slept properly either, as she constantly had to put him back on his mattress during the course of the night.

By the time Ghassan and his family left, there were smiles on all of their faces, and his mother was very moved and grateful. Stories like this are what motivate us to continue providing mobility and help to children who are not lucky enough to have the resources we do here in the US. Thanks to all the people who helped to make our trip to Jordan a reality. ~ Arwen



Ghassan in his new wheelchair

News for Computer Users

Good Search

For all you computer users, there is a new way that you can help Eleanore's Project while doing internet searches. Please consider using <http://www.goodsearch.com>. They use Yahoo search and share revenue generated by searches with qualified 501 (c) (3) organizations like Eleanore's Project. In the "I'm supporting" box, just enter "Eleanore's Project". You can download toolbars that make it simple to automatically use Goodsearch as a primary search engine – and you can still use other engines if need be. Goodsearch generates about \$.01 per search which doesn't sound like much, until you realize the power of numbers. If 100 people do 2 searches a day for one year, it adds up to \$730.00. Wheelchair sponsorships cost \$300.00 each, so that means 2 children will have wheelchairs with a third on the way. And this costs the computer user nothing.

Please tell all your friends and use Good Search yourself – and thanks for helping Eleanore's Project!

New website

If you have not yet seen our new and improved website, please visit soon. Our webmistress Julian redesigned the site during the summer and launched it on August 2, Eleanore's birthday and the anniversary of the founding of Eleanore's Project. The site is more user friendly with more content and two photo galleries – for Peru and Jordan. Soon to come – a blog that will enable us to provide updates easily, especially during expeditions out of the country. It will be user friendly so please give it a try even if you are one of the many who struggled with the Mobility Forum site during our time in Jordan. We promise this will be better!

Faces from Jordan



As ever, Eleanore's Project is so grateful to our friends and supporters who made the September expedition possible. We love to share stories and smiles from our travels!



Above: Ahmed waits while Eleanore's Project therapists customize his chair at the Amman distribution site.

Right: Ahmed happily seated in his new wheelchair.



Above: Layali, a girl from Mafraq, waves to the camera from her new specialized wheelchair.



Left: Miriam and her family came to Jordan from their home country of Iraq so that she could get treatment for her spina bifida. She was not originally on our list of children to treat, but thanks to the generosity of Eleanore's Project supporters, we had enough supplies to get her all set up in a new wheelchair.

"Our first task in approaching another people, another culture, another religion, is to take off our shoes, for the place we are approaching is holy. Else we might find ourselves treading on people's dreams. More serious still, we may forget that God was here before our arrival."

~ Max Warren, missionary

“Jordan Expedition” Continued

an immense network of friends and colleagues who were eager to help, and could see with my own eyes the desperate circumstances of disabled children in Jordan.

From the summer of 2005 on, I began to travel all around the Kingdom to measure and evaluate children with special needs for Eleanore’s Project chairs. My heart was broken time and time again – from Saddam, who was in a corner buried under a pile of blankets the first time I saw him, to Adel, whose vice-like grip on my hands made me never want to leave him, to Ghassan, whose mother tearfully recounted how her husband had abandoned her upon his birth. So many children, so many stories, so much pain...

After a year of evaluation, planning, and cooperation with various organizations and individuals all around the country, Eleanore’s Project Jordan became a reality in September of 2006. A team of therapists and specialists from North America flew into the capital, and two days later we were on the road, delivering wheelchairs all across the country.

We began in southern Jordan, the least populated and poorer part of the country, and the children we saw there won all of our hearts. There were so many children whose lives changed dramatically once they were fitted in their own wheelchair – Zaynab, who had been carried by her parents her whole life, was suddenly able to push herself and move independently, my special friend

Adel was able to sit up straight and face the world instead of hunching over like a small monkey, and Merwan, a charming 17-year-old arrived at the distribution site in his father’s arms and left in a wheelchair fit for him.

After a few days of distributions all over the South, we moved further north and continued seeing children in the capital, Amman, and surrounding areas. All things told we saw and were able to fit 157 children and young adults all across the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and left about 30 more wheelchairs at four different sites with people we trusted to distribute them properly. There are more stories than time in which to tell them, so let me leave you with just a few.

There was a darling young baby boy, Ali, from Southern Jordan with a terrible, debilitating seizure disorder that had his parents’ nerves frayed to the breaking point – the medication he was taking did not stop the seizures. He now has a special stroller, adapted for him, which allows his family to take him out more easily while supporting his growth and development. This family left their village at 4 in the morning to reach Amman at the beginning of the day to receive the chair for their son. Ali’s mother, father, and sister were all there, very excited and so grateful for the mobility Eleanore’s Project was able to provide for him. As a bonus, we were able to refer them to a doctor in Amman who provides some free care and is well known for working with seizure medications.

In Irbid, we saw Zakaria, a high

school student with muscular dystrophy who is clearly very intelligent, but who had been sitting in a wheelchair that was broken down and far too big for him. As a result he’d been slouching to one side constantly. Two of the therapists from Eleanore’s Project were able to fit him into a proper chair his size, so that he would not put stress on his back and possibly develop scoliosis.

One of my favorite moments of the distribution was a reunion with the Al-Rawashda family, from a small village near Irbid. They have four children, ranging in age from 10 to 22, and all of them have disabilities. Hana, the eldest daughter, and I had become good friends when I had visited them more than a year before the distribution, and we were so glad to see each other! It was great to see their whole family there, supporting these four siblings, and even better to see all of them sitting well in chairs that were specially fitted for them.

I would like to give all of you who helped in any way with Eleanore’s Project Jordan my deepest thanks – as I mentioned in an earlier letter, the children and adults who received wheelchairs from us are very close to my heart, and I felt so grateful that we could make such a concrete difference in their lives. It was very difficult for me to leave the relationships and community that I had developed over the past 27 months in Jordan, but I feel satisfied that through Eleanore’s Project we were able to provide mobility for some dear people, and will continue to do so with your support.

Our Spending Policy

100% of all donations made to Eleanore’s Project are spent on direct services for children in Peru and Jordan unless designated otherwise. Donors may stipulate

whether they wish to support work in Peru or in Jordan; if there is no designation the funds will be spent where most needed at the time. Under no circumstances will any donations be spent for operating

expenses unless they are designated for that purpose. We want you to know that your donations will be spent where they will count in the lives of children with disabilities and their families.



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Join Us! Would you like to become a partner with Eleanore's Project? Clip, fill out, and send in the form below to **Eleanore's Project, Inc.**, 501 E. Central Ave., Missoula, MT 59801. **100% of monetary donations go to direct services to children with disabilities - never for operating costs.**

Full Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Telephone: (____) _____ E-mail: _____

Yes! Keep me informed about what's new with Eleanore's Project by sending me newsletters!

I am including a tax-deductible gift of \$ _____

Please tell me how I can become a monthly donor.

I cannot make a monetary donation now, but please tell me other ways I can be involved!

Please **do not** contact me via **postal mail**; I prefer to use **e-mail only**.

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