



eleanore's project

Eleanore's Project, Inc.

# Expedition Journal

Volume I, Issue 1 ♦ Fall 2005

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

**Tamara Kittelson-Aldred**, Co-chair

**Rick Aldred**,  
Co-chair

**Frances Coover**

**Sarah Mulligan**

**Erin Greytak**

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## Contact us!

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

## Greetings!

This newsletter celebrates the first birthday of Eleanore's Project as an official entity! We were incorporated on August 2, 2004, and several months later received our 501(c) (3) determination letter retroactive to that date. It is a happy coincidence for her family and friends that August 2 was Eleanore's birthday, as we remember her life and celebrate what we are doing to improve the quality of life for other kids with disabilities and their families.

In June 2003, a telephone call from my friend Don Dubuque was the beginning of Eleanore's Project. After his 2002 retirement as a special education teacher in the Polson School District, Don traveled to Peru several times where he met many people doing disability work. When the principal at Colegio La Alegría en el Señor in Lima requested help in obtaining wheelchairs for her students, Don called me for technical advice. Within weeks the effort was christened Eleanore's Project at Don's suggestion, and the name stuck when Eleanore's Project, Inc. was organized as a private operating foundation one year later.

This is the first issue of a twice yearly newsletter to keep friends and supporters of Eleanore's Project apprised of our activities. If you received this newsletter it is because you have signed up for our mailing list or expressed interest in another way, made a donation, your name was referred to us or we know you and thought you might be interested. But we only want to stay in touch if that is your wish. Please take seriously our notice about continued contact elsewhere in this newsletter.

- Tamara

**Would you like to  
change a child's life?**

**Sponsor a wheelchair!**

## Stay tuned for The Party!

We do not yet have a name for it, but this event is in the planning stages and will take place in Missoula in early December. It will involve good food, a festive atmosphere, and an opportunity to open the holiday season in the true spirit of giving. We will keep you posted!

## Carousel Fund Raiser

On July 13, 2005, A Carousel for Missoula hosted a fund-raiser for Eleanore's Project. On that day all proceeds from rides were donated to Eleanore's Project! This generous offer came about through long-time connections with the Carousel dating back to Rick's letter to the editor of the Missoulian in 1995, expressing gratitude for the Carousel and the fun Eleanore found there. We spent the day at the Carousel with a picture display and made connections with many people. The Missoula news media was generous in their coverage and overall the event was a great success. Our thanks go out to A Carousel for Missoula! Be sure to visit them when you are in the area.



## Eleanore's Project Peru

Don Dubuque's 2003 phone call to Tamara resulted in a November 2004 expedition to Peru in conjunction with ROC Wheels, a non-profit organization

based in Bozeman. The work included an educational workshop on wheelchair seating and positioning followed by delivery and fitting of approximately 75 wheelchairs at Colegio La Alegría en el Señor. A parent support meeting was requested by some families who attended the workshop, so on the last day Tamara and Rick met and shared stories with 22 parents of children with disabilities who study at the school. During this time the seeds of a longer term relationship were sown between La Alegría and Eleanore's Project. The team also did custom wheelchair fitting at La Victoria rehabilitation facility run by the Adventist Relief and Development Agency (ADRA).

In March 2005 an Eleanore's Project team returned to Peru. A wheelchair seating and positioning workshop preceded two days of wheelchair fittings in Lima with Rotary International and ROC Wheels. We then fit wheelchairs in Cusco at Hogar Clinica San Juan de Dios, a pediatric rehabilitation center where we enjoyed working with Equip K.I.D.S., a Canadian organi-

zation serving children with disabilities in Peru. Back in Lima at La Alegría, we did troubleshooting with wheelchairs provided in November, followed by an intense four days implementing an adaptive computer lab for students with disabilities. A partnership between La Alegría, Fundacion Telefonica (providing the funding) and Eleanore's Project (providing technical assistance) resulted in a lab that was described in El Commercial (a Lima newspaper) as "state of the art for Peru".

Rick and Tamara will return to Peru this November. At the 2nd International Augmentative and Alternative Communication Conference (sponsored by Equip K.I.D.S. in Cusco) they will speak about their experiences as parents of a non-verbal child with disabilities and the importance of alternative communication systems in the family. There will be time for furthering connections begun in Cusco last March, and they will also spend time in Lima at La Alegría following up on wheelchairs and the computer lab. They hope to return to the U.S. with crafts made by the students that will be sold through a fair trade store in Missoula.

Finally, we are in the fund-raising stage of a wheelchair trip to Peru in January 2006, when we hope to deliver wheelchairs to children at the Missionaries of Charity House of Peace (Mother Teresa's community), the National Rehabilitation Institute, and other venues with great need. We are actively seeking donations to sponsor wheelchairs.

Donations made to Eleanore's Project are tax deductible and 100% goes to direct services for children with disabilities and their families - not for operating costs.

## Yessenia's Story

We at Eleanore's Project are drawn to the stories of people's lives as they intersect - those with and without disabilities, in developed and developing countries. We all have much to learn from each other. We would like to share one story in each issue of our newsletter, to connect a real face and name with the work we have been privileged to do through Eleanore's Project.

**Yessenia** is a beautiful 19 year-old young woman whom we met at La Victoria last November, with her supportive parents and brother. Yessenia is unable to speak and when Tamara met her in the waiting area, she was lying on a floor mat, having been carried in her father's arms into the center. How many of us can imagine being carried by a parent at the age of 19?

Yessenia has severe cerebral palsy and without a wheelchair with proper seating support, she was limited to lying stiffly on the floor or bed unless she was held in a sitting position by her father or brother. She cannot speak, but her bright eyes missed nothing as we went to work on a wheelchair for her. Because of her extreme needs it was a challenge to configure a wheelchair for Yessenia, but after 5 1/2 hours of teamwork with her family we were successful. As you can see from the picture, everyone was happy!



## Meet our Founding Board Members

In July 2004 the first organizational meeting for Eleanore's Project occurred. The founding board has five members, with plans for expansion at a future date. In addition to Tamara and Rick (Eleanore's parents) our dedicated board of directors includes:

**Frances Coover** - Fran's first career in early childhood education spanned ten years; for the last four she ran her own school. From there she moved to non-profit organizational development and fundraising, winding up that career as a private consultant to several local organizations. Currently, she works at the University of Montana for a program called "Promoting Excellence in End of Life Care". She is a long-time friend of Eleanore and her family.

**Erin Greytak** - Erin worked with Eleanore for the last 18 months of her life. Having extensive work experi-

ence with people of all ages who have disabilities, Erin is currently employed as a Family Support Specialist at the Child Development Center in Missoula. In 2002 the Montana disability service providers and Department of Health and Human Services gave Erin the Service Provider of the Year award. Her energy and enthusiasm are contagious!

**Sarah Mulligan** - Sarah is currently the Executive Director of the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children. DEC is an international membership organization for those who work with young children with disabilities. In addition to her global perspective, Sarah is one of the lucky people who knew, loved and taught Eleanore.

We are grateful for the expertise, compassionate hearts, time and energy that each board member brings to Eleanore's Project.

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## Eleanore's Project Jordan

For two weeks in June, Tamara, Rick and Julian visited Arwen in Jordan, where she is serving in the special education program of the Peace Corps. Arwen had begun to learn about custom wheelchair needs in Jordan, and so during the family visit several contacts were made as the first steps toward a wheelchair trip targeted for the summer of 2006. The Kittelson-Aldred family were guests in several homes of families with children who have severe disabilities, and met with a person who expressed interest in assisting with development of Jordanian contacts that could make an Eleanore's Project partnership in Jordan a reality. Our impression is that custom wheelchairs for children may be a novel concept in Jordan. To date, we have measurements and information for about 50 children and young people with severe needs for custom wheelchairs, with more on the way.

## Eleanore's Project Online!

This summer Julian has done an awesome job of creating a website for Eleanore's Project. On the website you can see pictures from expeditions to Peru, read about our mission and vision, and even link to newspaper articles and slideshow presentations on the web. Please check it out!

## Do you want to hear from us again?

We know that everyone has different interests. We are passionately interested in the work of Eleanore's Project, but our cause may not be your cause. If you would rather not receive this newsletter again, please let us know! We want to target our communications to those who want to receive them, and we will not be offended if you choose not to do so. We would also appreciate knowing if you prefer email or regular mail communications.

Please see the form on the reverse of this page to indicate your preference, or e-mail us at [info@eleanoresproject.org](mailto:info@eleanoresproject.org) if you wish to be removed. Thank you!

## The Eleanore's Project Community...

### how can you help?

Eleanore and her family thrived because of a community of friends, families and professionals. Individual and organizational collaboration reaps great rewards - and yes, for children with disabilities it often does take a village! That is why we focus our work on collaborating with other groups, and seeking to involve individuals who would like to be part of a small community that is reaching out to children with disabilities who do not have the advantages of living in North America. By making connections one at a time we can have a lasting impact, as we seek to empower folks in developing countries not only with equipment but with knowledge.



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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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