



eleanore's project

Eleanore's Project, Inc.

Expedition Journal

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In This Issue:

- Faces from Peru
- Floating bubbles
- Professor's perspective
- Help us go green!
- Thanks to supporters

...and more!

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Eleanore's Project, Inc.
is a 501 (c) (3) non-
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Greetings from Tamara

As we enter the waning days of 2010, it is hard to believe the year will soon come to a close. After an exceedingly busy schedule in 2009, it has been good to take time to consolidate our gains and make plans for the future. We re-organized the Eleanore's Project office and made several presentations to organizations around Missoula. The World Federation of Occupational Therapy Congress took place in Santiago, Chile in May, where our poster session was presented by colleagues Kate Barrett (from St. Kate's) and Javier Vargas (from Yancana Huasy in Peru).

In December, a newsletter published by the American Occupational Therapy Association will feature an article co-authored by Sammie Wakefield (long-term OT volunteer from New Hampshire) and myself. Another milestone will take place with the launching of our new website in November and December. Julian Kittelson-Aldred has been working on a re-design that will not only be beautiful, but will

(Continued on page 6)

Don Dubuque, the godfather of Eleanore's Project, Inc.

Don Dubuque was a friend to Eleanore's Project, Inc. from the beginning. Tamara Kittelson-Aldred, Eleanore's mother and co-founder of EPI, met Don in 1998 through her work in Polson, MT. Don was a special educator at Polson High School and Tamara was an occupational therapist with the Montana Adaptive Equipment Program. In that role, she worked with several of Don's students, by helping them with wheelchair and other equipment needs.



Don (left) joined the Eleanore's Project team on two trips to Peru.

Fast forward to 2003, when Don called asking for advice on how to obtain wheelchairs for a school, La Alegría en El Señor, in Lima, Peru. Following his retirement, Don traveled to Peru and discovered the unmet needs there. At the same time, Eleanore's family had been discussing ways to honor her memory. That one phone call eventually led to Eleanore's Project, Inc. Don suggested our name and became affectionately known as the godfather of EPI.

EPI was incorporated in 2004; since then we have made eight expeditions to Peru and four to Jordan. Don's phone

(Continued on page 6)

2010 Tally

This year, your generous support helped us:

- custom-fit **194** wheelchairs
- provide **108** pieces of adaptive equipment
- for **188** smiling kids

And since 2004 you've helped us accomplish...

- 8** expeditions to Peru
- 4** expeditions to Jordan
- 3** international workshops
- 1** Institute for parents and families

Easy as pie: Good Shop helps kids!

When you shop online for gifts this holiday season and all year round, you can donate to Eleanore's Project, Inc. without spending an extra dime. Check out www.GoodShop.com to find an amazing array of participating stores.

Enter "Eleanore's Project" in the field indicating the charity for whom you are shopping and we will receive a portion of the amount you spend. That's it—no hassle and *easy as pie*.



Floating bubbles in Peru · Laura Miklautsch · Florence, Montana

This past March I had the opportunity to travel to Peru for the third time with Eleanore's Project. Once again, I am amazed by the men and women who come together for the shared purpose of helping children with disabilities gain a measure of comfort and independence. Each therapist and volunteer brings with them such a wealth of skill, experience and passion; it's difficult *not* to be swept up in the enthusiasm! I have learned so much from each of these people.

While each therapist arrives with a variety of tools and supplies, I bring a tote bag of assorted silly toys. For two weeks I am the chief bubble-blower and wind-up toy operator! It can take hours to fit and adapt a wheelchair "just right" for some of the kids. Sometimes the children can be fearful or bored, and many have traveled for hours just to get to the wheelchair clinic site. But there is nothing like watching a child's eyes light up and cries turn to giggles when there are bubbles drifting in the air!

Last March a 12 year old boy named Stiph especially tugged on the hearts of all us. This handsome boy traveled with his mother from Cusco to Arequipa and he appeared wary of all the activity in the room. The preliminary assessments had taken place, a special wheelchair was selected for Stiph to try out and... he panicked. He became as rigid as a board and his terrified screams gained intensity. Every heart in the room ached for him.



Soothing voices tried to calm him. A couple of us quickly brought toys trying to distract him but nothing worked until floating bubbles caught his attention. Slowly, his cries quieted as he watched the bubbles and his tense body eased until he was relaxed in his new wheelchair.

When one of us got a bit light-headed from blowing bubbles, someone else would step in. As adjustments were made to Stiph's seating, it was necessary to lift him in and out several times. The panic would return each time and again the bubbles helped calm him. However, with each transfer he was able to relax into his chair a bit more easily, until in the end, there was no panic at all. He even blessed us with some shy smiles.

When it came time to take Stiph's exit photo, it was a picture of a handsome boy, sitting comfortably straight and tall...smiling.

CS



Laura (left) blows bubbles while a team of therapists and students work on Stiph's wheelchair in March 2010.

Sponsor A Wheelchair, Sponsor a Child Campaign



50!

\$300.00

Available Sponsorships!

We need 50 sponsorships to financially fulfill our wheelchair requests in Peru March 2011.



Get these guys off our backs!

- You will receive a photo & story of the child you sponsored.**

Both these mothers brought their boys to Eleanore’s Project, Inc. wheelchair clinic, by their only means possible: on their backs. Peru is not a country known for manufacturing wheelchairs, thus, they must be shipped from out of the country. Unless a child has a more reliable form of mobility and support other than on his mother’s back, attending school, sitting at table with his family and friends or going into his community are only a dream. For only **\$300.00** you can provide a custom-fit wheelchair for a child or teenager. Consider sponsoring a wheelchair as a group—your co-workers, your civic group, your church, your poker club, your neighborhood, your book club...

There are 3 ways to Sponsor a Wheelchair, Sponsor a Child!



Call: 406.370.4717

**Mail to:
Eleanore’s Project, Inc.
501 E. Central Ave.
Missoula, MT 59801**

As always, 100% of all donations go directly to children with disabilities and their families, never for op-

Questions or comments? Email us: eleanoresproject@gmail.com or call 406-370-4717
Eleanore’s Project, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt non-profit.

Faces from Peru



Right: A mother gathers her son into a blanket sling—his only means of mobility before receiving a wheelchair.



1



2

Left: Diana Marcela, age 6, from Punta Hermosa, was born with cerebral palsy. With her new wheelchair, she began attending school.



3

Below: Jusef, age 12, of Chimbote, was born with a mild form of cerebral palsy. His chair brings new independence and the chance to go to school.



Left: Viviana, age 4, of Lima, was born with spina bifida. Before leaving the wheelchair clinic, she was already learning to propel her own chair.



When we do the best that we can, we never know what miracle is wrought in our life, or in the life of another.

—Helen Keller

I have participated in three Eleanore's Project expeditions to Peru since 2008 and I am looking forward to another trip in March 2011. I have participated in EPI as a St. Catherine University Occupational Therapy faculty member, accompanying a cohort of occupational therapy students from St. Kate's each year.

When we started the partnership with EPI, I thought it would be a great experience for the students to be immersed in another culture and to learn the principles of wheelchair seating from experts. And it has been that. But it has been so much more for both myself and the students. Each trip leaves me with new appreciation for how EPI has met the needs of organizations and families throughout Peru and, in so doing, offered our students an amazing educational and cultural experience.

I am in awe of the dedication of EPI and all their supporters to sustain a program that continues to meet the diverse needs of children with disabilities and their families in Peru. I get chills when I tell stories about how EPI works and all of the parties involved, including the inmates in the South Dakota State Penitentiary who aspire to work in the Hope Haven wheelchair workshop because the work is meaningful. Everyone involved with EPI gives and receives.

I have been deeply touched by the stories of the families who bring their children from distant villages so that they can have a better life. In a culture in which disability is seen as shameful (I would argue, similar to our own culture), these families travel through the night with their children on their laps – feeding them, changing them, caring for them - for a wheelchair that will improve their ability to breathe, eat, communicate, move

around the community and in some cases go to school for the first time.

But the real reason why I continue to participate is because I have the privilege to bring occupational therapy students, our future health care professionals, to Eleanore's Project, Inc. I know they are better healthcare professionals because of this experience. They arrive wide eyed and full of energy to get to work. They leave the experience humbled by their privileged lives and determined to make the world a kinder place for children with disabilities and their families.

Thanks to Eleanore's family, both immediate and global, we at St. Kate's are better people and better professionals. ☪

A different kind of gift

Do you know people who seem to have everything? What about those at the other end of the spectrum? We know of so many children and youth who need more than you can imagine, and you can help them!

We are happy to announce that *JustGive.org*, our online charitable giving service, has joined with *I Do Foundation*. This helps engaged couples celebrate generously and conveniently by asking for donations to Eleanore's Project, Inc. in lieu of a gift. And charitable giving can be part of any life event, not just weddings. Go to *JustGive.org* and celebrate any gift giving event by donating to Eleanore's Project.



This year, your family could choose Eleanore's Project Inc., for gift giving in each other's name during the holiday season. Your gift will be tax deductible, it is easy and convenient, your gift will not be used for operating costs, and your gift will literally change the life of a child.

We can provide an announcement of your gift to the recipient, suitable for placing in a greeting card. Please contact us at 406.370.4717 or eleanoresproject@gmail.com if you are interested or with any questions. ☪

("Greetings" continued from page 1)

eliminate some of the bugs in the old site and be easier for us to update. The new website is currently under construction.

As I write, our partners in Peru are evaluating and measuring the next cohort of wheelchair recipients for our March 2011 expedition. In December, I will travel to South Dakota to select wheelchairs for shipment to Peru, based on their measurements and special requests. In

early January, our shipment will leave for the long journey to Peru. Occupational therapy students at St. Catherine University have completed applications to be part of the expedition and will soon begin academic preparation for their field-work experience as participants in our wheelchair clinics. We have a full roster of clinicians for the team and are recruiting for rehab technology suppliers/technicians to join us.

In the midst of all this preparation

for our work in Peru, we are thinking about topics for the future EPI's Institute for Professionals and Families here in Montana and perhaps some other ways we can offer unique educational services for children and families in our area. Not to mention planning for our *A Joyous Party* on Friday, December 3, 2010. If you are near the Missoula area, please join us!

- Tamara

("Remembering a friend" Continued from page 1)

call in 2003 has resulted in over 1300 children receiving wheelchairs, positioning equipment that comes with training for their families and others who work with them. This means over 1300 children with physical disabilities have been able to leave their homes for the first time without being carried. Many have gone to the market and begun attending school for the first time. Proper positioning and support has allowed over 1300 children to sit upright, learn to control

their bodies in new ways, breathe and eat better, experience a new kind of dignity and some have become independently mobile for the first time in their lives.

EPI strongly believes in building local capacity and sustainability. We work only with trusted partners who are actively engaged in developing wheelchair programs where the recipients have access to regular follow-up, repairs and growth adjustments. Our goal is to provide the same standard of care experienced by children in wealthier

countries like the United States.

Don accompanied the EPI team of professional volunteers on expeditions to Lima, Peru in 2004 and 2005. His prayers and good wishes continued to accompany us later on, even when he could not. In April he entered eternity after living with cancer for many years. He was a dear friend and an inspiration to everyone who knew him, and will always be the godfather of Eleanore's Project Inc.

☪

About Eleanore's Project, Inc.

Eleanore's Project is named after Eleanore Tesia Kittelson-Aldred, a little girl who loved the color purple, swimming and the book, The Rainbow Fish. She was born deaf with cerebral palsy and she died unexpectedly in 2001 just before her 12th birthday. Eleanore's Project, Inc. has made expeditions to hold wheelchair, adaptive equipment and augmentative communication clinics in Peru and Jordan since 2004.

The gift of a wheelchair gives much more than just mobility. It improves the quality of life—better health, developmental progress, social acceptance, ability to attend school, independence and dignity.

Do you want to hear from us again?

We know that our cause may not be your cause. We want to send this newsletter only to those who want to receive it. Please tell us if you want your name removed from our list – we will not be offended! Call us at 406-370-4717 or email us at eleanoresproject@gmail.com if you wish to be removed, or use the form on the outside cover to indicate your preference.



Help us go green!

Eleanore's Project, Inc. is making a conscious effort to be 'greener'. We incorporate several practices to make our dollars stretch further, because we believe that our funds should go to the people for whom they are intended – disadvantaged children and youth with disabilities and their families. These practices are also environmentally responsible and decrease our impact on the Earth.

- 🌱 We prevent used wheelchairs and adaptive equipment from ending up in landfills by finding them new homes after refurbishing. These expensive items often gather dust when no longer needed by their original owners. Since private insurance companies, Medicaid and Medicare do not pay for used equipment and most people who need such items are covered by one of these programs, it is difficult to find buyers for secondhand equipment.
- 🌱 Our headquarters is tucked away in a home to minimize overhead costs.
- 🌱 We make use of donated, recycled or used office supplies and furniture whenever possible.
- 🌱 Our computer equipment is primarily secondhand, given new life by Rick Aldred.
- 🌱 Our limited mailings arrive in your mailboxes in black and white.
- 🌱 We are striving to make our mailings paperless so **PLEASE** send your email address to: eleanoresproject@gmail.com. We promise—no spam and we won't share your info!
- 🌱 Through our efforts to be green, we can place at least 20 more kids in wheelchairs, with all the services necessary to ensure their successful use.

¡Muchas Gracias!

Eleanore's Project wishes to thank the following organizations and individuals for contributions in 2010.

MONTHLY DONORS & WHEEL-CHAIR SPONSORS:

- The Knights of Columbus
- The Buuck Foundation
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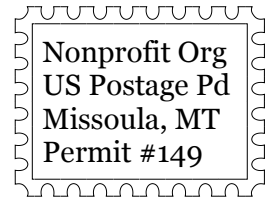
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- Rehab Equipment Associates
- Title Services, Inc.

- Mary Jo Wagner
- Sammie Wakefield
- Y.O.D.A. – Youth Opening Doors through Advocacy
- Zootown Brew

2010 PERU TEAM:

- Brittany Arcand, OT student
- Kate Barrett, OTD
- Hilary Frank, OT student
- Michelle Honek, OT student
- Julian Kittelson-Aldred
- Tamara Kittelson-Aldred, OTR/L, ATP
- Patty McTigue, ATP
- Laura Miklautsch, special educator
- Aaron Pierce, ATP
- Kinzie Phillips, OT student
- Jeffrey States, ATP
- Shingo Takemoto
- Mary Jo Wagner, OT, ATP
- Sammie Wakefield, OTR, ATP
- Megan Warfield, OT student

We know this list is incomplete; please know that we thank all of you, who support Eleanore's Project through donations and word of mouth. We could not do this important work without such fine companions. ☺



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406.370.4717
www.eleanoresproject.org

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A Joyous Party

4:30 - 7:30 p.m. • Friday, Dec. 3

A Carousel for Missoula

Fun, food & carousel rides for all!



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 or greener yet, email us at eleanoresproject@gmail.com or call 406.370-4717.

**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: _____

I am including a tax-deductible gift of \$25 \$50 \$75 \$100 \$_____

Or Donate with your credit card! Visit www.eleanoresproject.org/donate for details.

Please tell me how I can become a monthly donor.

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

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

