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# news release

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **PRISON PARTNERS WITH DISABILITY MINISTRY TO CREATE REGENCY PEDIATRIC WHEELCHAIRS: Gift of Mobility Touches Children and Inmates**

**AGOURA HILLS, Calif., Oct. 8, 2009** – Leaders from the Joni and Friends (JAF) “Wheels for the World” disability ministry, together with their partners at Taft Correctional Institution, recently gathered for the presentation of the first Regency Pediatric Wheelchair. The project was made possible by Ron Regenstreif, who is the owner of Regency Lighting and a JAF board member. The goal for the project is to produce 250 specialized pediatric wheelchairs at the Taft facility for children in developing nations.

“This new partnership between Joni and Friends and the Taft Correctional Institution is going to enhance the lives of so many members of the disabled community,” said Doug Mazza, JAF president. “We are so excited and immensely appreciative of our friends at Taft. The lives of the children who will be receiving Regency Pediatric Wheelchairs will be changed, and we believe God is going to do great things through this partnership and this ministry.”

In the nations such as China, El Salvador, India and Romania, where “Wheels for the World” outreach teams serve, the children who come for wheelchairs receive the message of salvation of Christ along with the attention and care of teams of therapists and wheelchair mechanics. The wheelchairs are carefully fitted to each recipient, and with adjustable features, will be able to “grow” with the children.

Purchase of these chairs is a virtual impossibility in developing nations. Because of them, children’s lives will be transformed. These wheelchairs give them mobility outside their home, allowing them to attend school and participate in family and community life. The practical demonstration of Christ’s love by “Wheels for the World” through this pediatric wheelchair ministry is working to fill a huge need in the disabled community.

These life-changing wheelchairs are constructed at the wheelchair restoration department of the Taft Correctional Institute in Taft, Calif. Inmates at the facility restore and refurbish used wheelchairs, and now manufacture new Regency Pediatric Wheelchairs that are shipped to developing nations. Taft is one of 17 correctional facilities in the United States where inmates are given the opportunity to partner with

JAF and find purpose in their lives by helping give the gift of mobility to children and adults they will never meet.

At a luncheon provided by the institution, Mazza expressed his thanks to the inmates for the work they do, reminding them they are making a difference in lives of children and adults with disabilities all over the world. Joni Eareckson Tada, JAF founder, sent her own words of greeting, thanks and encouragement through a videotaped message.

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**Note to Editors: To arrange an interview with Joni Eareckson Tada, Doug Mazza or other Joni and Friends spokespeople, please contact Melany Ethridge of A. Larry Ross Communications at 972.267.1111 or [melany@alarryross.com](mailto:melany@alarryross.com).**