

Wheelchairs bring joy to season for those in need

By Annette Hardy

Thailand public affairs missionary

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Donation of wheelchairs makes givers and receivers happy.

Photo by Elder Keith Hardy

On Christmas Day 2009, three vans left Bangkok at 6 a.m. to drive north five hours to Mae Prik Hospital. The mission was the delivery of new wheelchairs to needy people. They were provided by LDS Charities.

Two vans carried members of the Bang Rak Rotary Club. Elder Ray Caldwell and Sister Judy Caldwell, country directors, were among the senior missionaries in the third van. All the visitors were welcomed by several local Rotarians from nearby cities. Gathering on Christmas Day for this memorable wheelchair delivery became the true highlight of the holiday, involving all in the joy of giving and receiving.

Nine speakers referred to the fact that this was the epitome of the true spirit of Christmas. The occasion gave the unique opportunity to follow the Savior's example. The recipients were solemn as they were invited to sit in their new wheelchairs. At first, they were dubious, almost unwilling to allow themselves the pleasure of obtaining a wheelchair for their comfort and mobility. Eventually, they relaxed, and smiles radiated on their faces. At last, they came to terms with the fact that this gift was permanent. Their caretakers were also overwhelmed with gratitude.

The dynamic Rotarian members present were successful business people who do more for the disadvantaged in Thailand than any other service group. Their motto is "Service above self."

LDS Charities has been instrumental in Thailand in the donation of 5,000 wheelchairs, 1,000 per year since 2004.