Fabricio got a brand-new wheelchair and a whole new outlook on life at our recent Wheels for the World outreach in El Salvador! Read more life-changing stories inside!
I’m celebrating a milestone birthday and it’s a dream-come-true. There’s nothing God loves more than keeping promises, answering prayers, performing miracles, and fulfilling dreams. That is who he is. That is what he does. The bigger our prayers and dreams, the better. That way, God gets more glory when those prayers and dreams are fulfilled.

As I turn 72, I’m still reaching for the dream God gave me more than 40 years ago. A dream to bring the Gospel to the world’s forgotten and neglected... people with disabilities.

I got the idea from Jesus’s own words in Luke 14, so we simply can’t settle for a small vision — one that is more doable, more achievable, or can be accomplished without God’s divine intervention. Nothing honors Jesus Christ more than a big dream that is way beyond our ability to fulfill. Because when that dream comes true, there’s no way we can take credit for it. God is the one who receives all the glory.

It’s why I’m so excited about the expansion of Joni’s House around the world as we give hands-on help and the hope of Christ. Then there’s the hefty lineup of Wheels for the World™ teams heading out this month and next, all of them traveling to the darkest corners of the globe. The dream is coming true among countless families struggling with disability as they yield to Christ at our International Family Retreats in Peru, China, El Salvador, Brazil and beyond.

A Gospel-driven dream is God’s gift to us; what we do with it is our gift back to God. So on my benchmark birthday, I am giving all praise, honor, and glory to God for the way he is unfolding the dream right before our eyes. And we’re still reaching for its fulfillment as we work to completely fill the Father’s house, just as he asked.

When you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind and you will be blessed... compel them to come in, so that my house will be full.

LUKE 14:13, 23

The need is so great! Thank you for sending the hope of Jesus to these dear souls, eagerly anticipating their turn during our recent Wheels for the World distribution in El Salvador.

So, on my birthday, please help me keep reaching for this larger-than-life dream! It’s the one Jesus birthed in my heart to “invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind... compel them to come in... so that my house will be full.”

“Do this,” Jesus says, “and you will be blessed.” Oh, yes, I am blessed. And I pray you are, too. I’m so grateful to God you are living the dream with me!

PS... and I am overwhelmed with all the reflections and encouragements from you that keep arriving in the mail! It’s great to know your heart is with us!
“At Joni’s House, We Learned That Everything is Possible!”

At Joni’s House El Salvador, we are providing special needs families with complete spiritual, physical, social and economic care. No longer will people with disabilities get leftover scraps of care. At Joni’s House, children and adults have access to top-notch doctors, therapists, counselors and pastors as we strive to set a new standard of care. It’s a safe haven for what the world considers the least of these, and a place where our brothers and sisters with disabilities find the exact opposite of what they’re used to elsewhere… respect, love and hope.

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That’s what Andy and his family discovered at Joni’s House El Salvador. Andy is 11 years old. He was born without arms yet has remained a very social and active boy who loves to paint with his feet, practice karate and swim. That is, until COVID-19 took away his opportunities to interact with others and propelled Andy into severe depression that took a huge toll on his mental health. “I don’t want to be locked up,” Andy told his mother. “I can’t stand this confinement anymore.” Andy had been a good student up until the global pandemic hit home, but he quickly started failing his classes and losing sight of his purpose.

But all that changed once Andy walked into Joni’s House. “Joni’s House has made us improve spiritually as well as emotionally because they’ve helped us as a family,” shares Andy’s mom, Angela. At Joni’s House, Andy receives occupational therapy, physical therapy and emotional therapy – bringing him out of his depression and renewing his zeal for life.

“My favorite part of Joni’s House is to meet kids like me – to meet friends with disabilities,” explains Andy with a huge smile on his face. At Joni’s House, Andy has been able to develop his gifts and build up his confidence.

“Joni’s House is a great help to us economically,” says Wilfredo, Andy’s dad. “Therapies are the most expensive thing, but Andy will be able to have it because of Joni’s House.”

Andy’s parents once feared what the future would entail for their son as he battled depression, but now, because of your support and God’s great love, they smile at the thought of all God has in store for their little boy. “At Joni’s House,” his mother explains, “we learned that everything is possible!”

See more of Andy’s miraculous transformation here!
People with disabilities are even more neglected in El Salvador than here in the United States. But during our recent Wheels for the World outreach, each person who came was treated with the utmost respect and given personal, one-on-one attention. No wonder everyone was so excited as they waited their turn to meet with our physical therapists and wheelchair mechanics.

There were smiles on the faces of everyone there that day, but one of the biggest smiles was seen on the face of eight-year-old Helena, who has cerebral palsy.

“I saw God because of Wheels for the World!”

Helena’s father, Samuel, brought her to our distribution site where she received her first wheelchair, and they both heard the Good News about Jesus. It took almost all day to ensure that Helena’s wheelchair fit her perfectly, but her excitement never waned. Now, because of your faithful partnership in ministry, Helena has the opportunity to go to school and church. She has a whole new outlook on life, and her father beamed with pride as he saw his little girl being treated as the princess God created her to be.

You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

1 PETER 2:9
Feeling Christ’s Touch Through the Gift of a Wheelchair

Our hearts broke when we met two-year-old Dennis and his mother, Marina, during our recent Wheels for the World trip in El Salvador. Dennis suffers from frequent convulsions. He is unable to eat anything without a feeding tube, and since he is restricted to a liquid diet, Marina spends much of her day feeding her son so that he won’t become malnourished. His 24-hour care is complicated. With tears streaming down her face Marina explains simply, “It’s tough…”

Dennis often appears unresponsive. “Does he even feel my touch? Does he know that I love him?” Marina asked as her voice cracked with emotion. These are the questions of a broken-hearted mother, yet when we fitted Dennis into his very first wheelchair and demonstrated the tangible love of God to this special family, Marina received new hope and declared, “I have to be brave. My son needs me!”

“We could never afford something like this. The little money we earn goes to paying for his medications. Thank you very much! I’m very grateful!” Marina went on to explain that it was becoming increasingly difficult to administer feeding tube meals to Dennis because before being placed in his wheelchair, all he ever did was stay in bed. “It was detrimental to him,” confessed Marina. “This wheelchair will help us a lot!”

The specialty pediatric wheelchair you sent Dennis has given him both dignity and mobility, and every time his mother puts her hands on his wheelchair, she will remember the hands of Jesus offering her strength and courage to face each new day.

Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.

JOSHUA 1:9

And while we were serving families living with disability in El Salvador through Wheels for the World, our local teams were sharing Christ’s love with special needs families here in the United States, too!

From Knoxville

Seven-year-old Braden and his twin brother Thatcher were born prematurely at only 27 weeks gestation. Both had severe brain bleeds, but while Braden seemed to recover from his traumatic birth, Thatcher’s story is quite different. He has cerebral palsy, seizures and significantly impaired vision. Thatcher can only say a handful of words, but his favorite word to say is “Go!” And, boy… does he love to go! He and Braden had non-stop fun at Family Retreat!

For the boys’ parents, Tanner and Lauren, the best part of Family Retreat was that no one stared at them or made them feel inferior. “It’s been different in that, for the first time, we aren’t different. We don’t have to explain what it’s like to have Thatcher or why we look so tired,” shares Tanner.

At Family Retreat, Tanner and Lauren were finally able to relax, knowing that their boys were well cared for and having the time of their lives. No wonder Tanner asked, “Now, can we go ahead and sign up for the rest of our lives?”

Thank you for letting special needs families know that they have a place of belonging in the body of Christ!

“Thatcher loved dancing at Family Retreat!”
From Louisiana

Maddie was born with chromosome 10 deletion, a rare genetic abnormality that included deafness, a cleft palate and a hole in her heart. Her mother, Mallory, struggled with intense loneliness from not knowing any other families living under the strain of isolation and disability.

But all that changed when they went to Family Retreat! “I cried tears of joy,” explains Mallory. “I had an overwhelming amount of joy that not only was this the first place I had ever taken Maddie that I didn’t have to ‘explain’ her or why she made the noises that she does, but that Maddie could be herself!”

At Family Retreat, every member of the family is celebrated as fearfully and wonderfully made by the very hands of God!

From New Mexico

In addition to their three biological children, Matt and Christy have four more adopted children – all with Down syndrome from around the world. Endale came from Ethiopia, Lilly and Levi came from the same orphanage in China, and little Glory is from Bulgaria.

And while they know that adopting these four little ones is all part of God’s plans for their lives, Matt and Christy still struggle with overwhelming feelings of exhaustion. But at Family Retreat, they receive the physical and spiritual rest they need. “Joni and Friends exemplifies inclusion and service in love,” explains Christy. With seven children constantly needing something from her, Family Retreat offers Christy a place of rest that just can’t be found anywhere else. Being able to trust those caring for her children made all the difference.

“I could rest because I knew that the people they were with loved them.”

Because of your love and prayers, more and more families like Matt and Christy’s are finding the peace that surpasses all understanding at Family Retreat!

From Chicago

Mikey (on the left) has severe attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and separation anxiety, which makes it close to impossible for him to make friends. And while feelings of rejection and loneliness compound the challenges of disability on a daily basis for Mikey, he experienced the exact opposite at Family Retreat!

Stephan, Mikey’s Family Retreat buddy explains, “He told me that people don’t like him, but here at Family Retreat, he just lit up! It was amazing! The love of God was at work!”

Glory’s smile says it all: The joy of the Lord is found at Family Retreat!

Mallory, Maddie and her brother Blake all felt God’s love at Family Retreat!

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!

1 JOHN 3:1

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

MATTHEW 11:28
From North Carolina

Four-year-old Ezequiel has hydrocephalus, spina bifida and a seizure disorder. We were able to give him his first wheelchair when our North Carolina team visited the Dominican Republic with Wheels for the World. And that wheelchair – and the Gospel – completely changed his life!

As soon as Ezequiel was placed in his new wheelchair, he started moving around on his own. He explored everything! No longer would he spend his days down in the dirt. His new seat of dignity allows little Ezequiel to see the world from a whole new perspective! And it’s outfitted with a sturdy tray that will be used as a desk once Ezequiel goes to school, which is now possible due to his new-found mobility.

His mother Karina could barely contain her joy. “Thank you!” she declared. “May you be blessed! Please keep up your good work as you make our lives easier. You have blessed not just us, but many others as well. This wheelchair is beyond our ability to provide for our son. We are thankful that someone from so far away has sent a gift to our son.”

Your love and support changes lives all over the world! Thank you for helping special needs children and their families live an abundant life!

Jesus Gives Us Abundant Life!

There are lots of exciting events happening in your area, too!

In addition to Family Retreats and Wheels for the World outreaches, our Field teams are offering Respite Events, Support Groups, Church Trainings and all sorts of Family Fun gatherings.

Visit joniandfriends.org/events today and find out how you can get involved!

Joni’s Christmas Cards Available Now!

Two new designs featuring art by Joni Eareckson Tada.

Arise, Shine, for Christ Has Come!

Inspired by Luke 2:4, Joni recaptures Joseph and Mary’s travels in her painting Journey to Bethlehem. “It was 60 hard miles over rough terrain, and I think it’s amazing how God led them safely every step of the way. It’s just one more poignant sacrifice to celebrate in the Christmas story,” explains Joni.

With embossed mountain details that make the landscape literally jump off the front of these cards, your friends and family will surely be reminded of God’s great love during this glorious Christmas season!

Interior Message:
May the Light of Christ’s Love
Be Aglow in your Heart and Home
Throughout this Happy Season...
And may your Christmas be Bright!

Product Details:
• 3¾” x 8½”
• 15 cards & 16 envelopes per box

$12

God’s Peace Be With You

Joni designed this beautiful new Christmas card from her Mountain Church at Christmas painting. “I want the viewer to run toward the warmth of the church, finding inside the comfort and fellowship of Christ. It’s what Christmas is all about!” shares Joni.

The sparkling, iridescent snowflake details on this card evoke feelings of comfort and joy — inviting all who see it into the peaceful serenity of the true meaning of Christmas.

Interior Message:
May the Peaceful Serenity of this Season
Fill your Heart and Home as we Celebrate
Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace
Enjoy a Blessed Christmas!

Product Details:
• 5” x 7”
• 15 cards & 16 envelopes per box

$12

100% of all sales go directly to support disability ministry!

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Timeless Hymns for Family Worship

Joni Eareckson Tada invites families to rediscover some of the Christian faith’s most beloved songs and draws out powerful truths from the music that has inspired generations of believers. Joni shares these timeless favorites with your family, complete with a devotion and some historical background for each hymn. Experience anew God’s love, hope and peace as you worship and praise him together and introduce your children to the rich spiritual legacy contained in these timeless Christian anthems.

Each chapter includes...

- Spiritual Insights to Strengthen Your Faith — Short teachings from Joni are perfect for family devotion time and will illuminate your faith.
- The Stories Behind the Songs — Discover the historical background behind each hymn and more about the authors that penned these beautiful songs of worship.
- Music and Lyrics — Get sheet music and full lyrics to each hymn. Play and sing along with your favorites.

Product Details:
- Hardcover
- 9” x 10 ½”
- 80 pages

$23

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