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## **ROC WHEELS SEEKS MONTANA VETERANS, VOLUNTEERS TO HELP DISABLED CHILDREN**

BOZEMAN, MONTANA—A Bozeman nonprofit is helping children around the world gain the gift of mobility. “Every child deserves mobility,” says ROC Wheels Executive Director Dean Hampton, whose Warriors program engages area veterans in building and distributing mobility devices to children in Nepal, Kenya, Uganda, Kosovo, Mexico, Peru, and other needy countries.

The organization is now seeking a dozen or so Montana veterans and community volunteers to build wheelchairs and gait trainers for the kids. Hampton’s goal is to provide more than 300 chairs and 15 gait trainers across the globe in 2022.

Warriors also aims to help veterans find relief for their own suffering and PTSD by helping others. The program helps vets, Hampton says, through “the camaraderie from working on a team, fulfillment of doing something good, and seeing how they are ultimately helping kids.”

Studies show that altruistic behaviors benefit not only the recipients of good deeds but the providers as well. According to a 2020 *Psychology Today* article, “[Helping Others Is Good for Your Health](#),” assisting others can improve one’s own physical and mental health, happiness, and longevity.

Manufacturing the gait trainers—devices that put the child in a standing position to help them strengthen muscles and potentially walk—also helps ROC Warriors develop skills in welding, CNC machining, 3D CAD, power tools, and metalworking, Hampton says. “And, delivering the gait trainers and other mobility devices gives participants an opportunity to experience the direct impact their work has on the lives of children living with disabilities.”

The gait trainer program is new this year, thanks to a grant from the Gianforte Family Foundation, which allowed ROC Wheels to purchase a multiprocess welder, bandsaw, and CNC router. The equipment is up and running and Hampton’s small team of veterans and community volunteers are in the initial stages of bringing Hampton’s vision alive. “They’re part of something that can change a life,” he says.

Gianforte Family Foundation Executive Director Catherine Koenen underlines the importance of the Warriors program. “We are excited about the opportunity for Montana veterans to learn new skills and engage in such meaningful work. The program will improve lives on multiple levels.”

Veterans and veteran organizations representing all branches of military service are welcome, as are community volunteers. No experience or special background is required, only the willingness to help.

ROC Wheels also seeks financial support to fund the work of building and delivering mobility devices to children in under-resourced areas of the world. Each wheelchair costs \$1,500 and every mobility device changes the life of a child and their family forever. For more information or to make a gift, visit [www.rocwheels.org](http://www.rocwheels.org).

ROC (Reach Out and Care) Wheels is a faith-based nonprofit that works with people and partners of all faiths, along with the government entities in the countries they serve. For more information, contact Hampton at [dean@rocwheels.org](mailto:dean@rocwheels.org) or 406-556-8065.

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