

GOT CRUTCHES?

Where would you go if you need crutches, a walker, wheelchair or various other mobility items in your community?

In South Lake Tahoe we found there is no consolidated source for these items, new or used. Thrift stores, a pharmacy, Facebook or garage sales seemed to be the source but the supply was sketchy at best.

Seeing the need our club supported the idea of creating RotaryMobility.com, a single source for the collecting, storing, and providing used medical mobility equipment to those in need.

The program has grown far beyond our expectations. In the first year we have served 91 individuals with 127 pieces of equipment having a retail value of over \$11,000. For most of these "customers" this is their first contact with Rotary.

Less than \$200! That is the total investment. How do we do this? All of the items are donated by community members directly or through the hospital thrift store. Do we advertise? Only on social media at no cost and not frequently.

How do people find us? Referrals from doctors, Physical Therapy clinics, thrift stores, social media and word of mouth.

What about large pieces of equipment? If something is too big to handle and store we have acted as a "broker", keeping a list of people who might need something and matching that with a "donor". We have helped relocate hospital beds, stairlifts, and a wheelchair lift.

We do not charge for the items, they are given as gifts. The recipients are incredibly grateful and about 90% of the items are donated back to us. A few items have left town as they were needed by short term visitors who were injured.

Do we raise money to support the program? Yes, about 10% of the recipients make donations without our even asking. Gifts have ranged from someone reaching into his pocket and pulling out \$4, to \$150 donations, mostly from visitors, and one person who needed a rolling knee scooter who appreciated our service so he bought and donated two more.

As the program grows there will be a need for a dedicated phone line, possibly a more robust website, and rented storage space. For now all calls go through my personal phone and the storage space is donated.

Are you interested in a presentation and possibly developing a similar program? If so please contact me. We would be glad to make a presentation and, if interested, help your club set up a program. To date we have made one presentation to the Frisco, Colorado Rotary Club. They saw the potential and are now adapting the program to their community needs.

This is a minimal cost program with broad impact and support serving a definite need. We hope you will consider providing this service in your community.

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