



Goodwill and FREE Assist Haitian Relief Efforts

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Roanoke, VA. A partnership between Goodwill Industries of the Valleys and the Foundation for Rehabilitation Equipment and Endowment (FREE) has resulted in more than \$40,000 worth of medically adaptive equipment being sent to the victims of the earthquake in Haiti.

As part of its donated goods effort Goodwill collects wheelchairs, walkers, crutches, and other mobility equipment. FREE refurbishes the equipment, and then distributes it to persons with a medical need who cannot afford to purchase it otherwise.

The equipment shipment is being coordinated by Goodwill in Miami, Florida as part of a nationwide effort to assist earthquake victims. The Miami Goodwill will see that it is properly packed and shipped to Haiti. Goodwill Industries of the Valleys is the first Goodwill organization from across the country to send material to Miami. Shipping costs to Miami will be borne by the Roanoke Goodwill organization.

"This is an exciting project for Goodwill Industries of the Valleys," says Goodwill President and CEO Bruce Phipps. "Our partnership with FREE began in 2004 and was a natural fit as we both seek to enhance independence for people with disabilities in Western Virginia. It is gratifying to be able to also assist those in need outside of our traditional service area."

FREE's mission is to help provide mobility related rehab equipment to enhance independence and improve quality of life. Executive Director Sonja Schaible states "FREE has a history of helping provide mobility equipment to people who cannot afford it. We hope this equipment will help alleviate some of the suffering in Haiti."

The equipment is expected to leave the Goodwill warehouse in Salem sometime within the next week.

Goodwill Industries of the Valleys, a United Way partner organization headquartered in Roanoke, serves 31 counties and 14 cities in the New River, Roanoke, and Shenandoah Valleys. Its mission is to help people and families in our community achieve a better life through work and independence. In 2009 Goodwill served over 32,000 people and placed 664 into competitive community employment.

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