

# Roth works as a voice for others

## Ms. Wheelchair California comes to Las Cruces church

By BETH SITZLER  
The Las Cruces Bulletin

Many search their entire life for a purpose – a reason they are special and significant. For Alyson Roth, her purpose in life came from a painful experience that led to a strength to help others.

After a car accident in 2000 left her paralyzed from the waist down, Roth was placed in a wheelchair, changing her life in every ways.

“After it happened, I asked God why,” she said. “I didn’t know the reason.”

She said the reason became clear after she learned about the Free Wheelchair Mission (FWM), an international nonprofit organization that sends inexpensive wheelchairs to disabled persons in developing countries. It was at that moment that she decided to be a voice for those who are handicapped and voiceless.

“These wheelchairs are affordable, durable and life changing,” said Roth, explaining that they consist of a plastic lawn chair, bicycle wheels and a metal frame.

Roth, who is the development manager for FWM, travels the country, speaking to groups and raising funds for the wheelchairs, which only cost \$51.79, much less than most chairs that can cost as much as \$8,000.

Las Cruces welcomed her and other FWM volunteers during a fundraising weekend for the nonprofit, which included a dance, fiesta and numerous speaking engagements.

While speaking on Sunday, June 14, at the Sierra Vista Community Church, Roth explained how with the help of God, the impossible – such as raising \$28,250 for a container of 550 wheelchairs – can be possible.

“Each person that gets (a wheelchair) is told that it’s a gift from God,” she said.

By giving up something as simple as a \$1.35 can of soda, can benefit someone across the world, Roth said.

“Just think about what you can live without, so someone can simply live,” she said.

If a person gives up one can of soda a week for a year, they will have \$70.20 that can be donated to FWM. While that may not sound like much, Roth said it’s enough to help someone who has been rejected by their society because of their physical condition.

“We want to make people understand that people with disabilities have emotions, they have needs, they have feelings,” she said.

As a new FWM distribution partner, Roth said Sierra Vista Community Church and the Las Cruces community will be in charge of the wheelchairs that



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**Alyson Roth, Ms. Wheelchair California, is flanked by low-cost wheelchairs made by the Free Wheelchair Mission for impoverished people.**

are sent to Juárez, Mexico. While distribution groups to Juárez have been established before, Roth said none have been successful.

This past Monday, June 15, a group from FWM went to Juárez and delivered 11 wheelchairs to Casa del Niño del Anciano. Over the weekend, the Las Cruces group raised \$25,955 and a container is expected to arrive in the next two months.

Roth is also Ms. Wheelchair California and will go to the national competition in South Dakota in August. The Ms. Wheelchair organization is an advocacy pageant that celebrates those with a mobility impairment who have made a difference in their community, the nation and around the world.

FWM was founded in 2001. As of May 2009, the organization has delivered more than 400,000 wheelchairs to 72 countries. Roth said they hope to reach 500,000 this year. The organization's goal is to lift 20 million up off the ground.

For more information on FWM or to make a donation, visit [www.freewheelchairmission.org](http://www.freewheelchairmission.org) or [www.liftinglives-nm.org](http://www.liftinglives-nm.org).