

1984

Putting her wheels in motion

"I use my nursing skills every day in one way or another," says Alice Teisan. "As nurses, we will always be on one end of the stethoscope or the other, whether we're practicing or as a patient."

*Alice Teisan, Class of 1984
Wheaton College-West Suburban
Hospital School of Nursing*



"When I was looking for a nursing school, West Suburban was affiliated with Wheaton College, an important factor for me," remembers Alice. "My father was a Wheaton alum and my aunt had graduated from West Suburban. So applying there was a natural progression, especially since their reputation preceded them. Now, it's been 30 years since I graduated! In fact, I was the last person pinned with the joint West Suburban/Wheaton College pin."

Alice's time at West Suburban planted the seeds for her life's work in ways she never could have anticipated. One unique aspect of her education that directly connects nursing to where she is now was a Service Learning trip to Zimbabwe that she went on in 1983. She notes, "I didn't realize it for 20 years, but I now feel that God was calling me, not to be a missionary, but to provide tools for the nationals so that they could help themselves."

During those two decades, Alice was pursuing her other passion as a cyclist. Her goal was to ride her bike on all seven continents and in every state. She was well on her way to realizing that dream, when on the eve of a major cycling trip, she came down with what she thought at first was a bad flu. Months later, she was diagnosed with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, a debilitating condition that meant Alice could no longer work or live normally, much less ride a bike.

Fast forward over a decade to Alice having dinner with a Tanzanian couple who informed her, to her surprise, that one of the most tangible needs in their home country was for bicycles. Pastors serving rural areas spent most of their time walking from village to village rather than serving in their ministry.

So bicycles became prominent in her life once again, setting the stage for her next step, not as a cyclist, but as the catalyst for helping others with transportation. In 2005, she founded His Wheels International, a non-profit organization that began providing bicycles for pastors and others in need in developing countries. After eight years and nearly 1,700 bicycles distributed, His Wheels now focuses primarily on serving people disabled by landmines, polio or birth deformities by providing them hand-pedaled three-wheelers that are prototyped and built by experts.

Alice's vision still revolves around conquering all the continents and as many countries as possible. It's just that she'll be supplying bikes to others instead of riding one herself. "It breaks my heart to see disabled people dragging themselves on the ground," she says. "Our trikes lift people out of the dirt and give them the dignity they deserve. They gain independence and the ability to see people eye-to-eye instead of always having to look up to others."

"My nursing skills have been indispensable in my work and have helped me navigate many years of disability in a profound way," adds Alice. "I am grateful for all that I learned at West Suburban and especially for the lifelong friendships that began there." Alice will share her inspirational story as the commencement speaker at Resurrection University's December graduation.

For more information on His Wheels International visit HisWheels.org.