

A serious illness was the end of her nursing career and the start of something amazing.



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For Alice Teisan '84, Resurrection University is almost a family tradition. Family ties go all the way back to the Wheaton College and West Suburban College of Nursing affiliation, where she followed in the footsteps of her aunt, Martha Waterlander Teisan (1955). After graduating from the West Suburban College of Nursing (1984) and starting her nursing career, Alice also started a life-long battle with ME/CFS (Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome). After a decade, the illness finally forced her to retire from nursing.

As it turns out, one career may have been ending, but her true life's calling was just beginning.

Alice met a couple from Tanzania and asked how her church could help with the mission and charity work in that country. To her surprise, they said, “bikes.” Transportation is an enormous challenge in Tanzania, and just being able to get around would be a tremendous benefit to workers and the communities they served.

Although Alice was only earning \$400 a month working part-time as a receptionist in a dental office, she donated \$1,200 to help buy bikes.

It was then she realized that she could make an enormous impact one bicycle at a time. As she likes to say, “The Lord challenged me.” And she responded. “Providing a tool to help people help themselves was my calling. It was born out of a nine-week vision while I was on a student missionary project in Zimbabwe.” The next year Alice was able to buy five bikes and five locally made, hand-pedaled three wheelers (affectionately call trikes) designed for people with lower extremity disabilities. The bikes and trikes were donated to people in need in Nigeria.

A life-long cycling enthusiast, bikes and trikes were a perfect fit for Alice. By the age of thirty, when she was struck with ME/CFS, she had already biked over 10,000 miles on four continents and coast-to-coast across the United States — twice.

In May 2005, Alice founded His Wheels International (HWI), a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit focused on providing bicycle transportation for those in need in African countries. After starting HWI, Alice attended a meeting with business people who were committed to making a difference in Ethiopia. After showing the attendees a picture of the Nigerian trike, an ex-pat from Ethiopia stated, "We need these trikes throughout Africa." For Alice, another dream was born. "I decided to take a welding class so I could build trikes." Alice stated. "Instead, I met Kevin Nikolich and fortunately for me, Kevin offered to design, build and pay for the trike prototyping."

His Wheels International started as a dream and now has a multi-discipline trike design team that includes engineers, nurses, physical therapists, occupational therapists, doctors, surgeons, kinesiology specialists and cycling enthusiasts all committed to continuously improving the design of their trikes.

Since 2005, HWI has designed 22 different hand-pedaled trike prototypes, completed three small trike production runs and designed manufacturing fixtures. Of the 120 HWI trikes that are currently in twenty-two countries, twenty trikes were built locally both in North

Africa and in India (at a Vocational Technical School), and another fifteen were welded together at a hospital in Ethiopia. HWI also delivers trikes as three-dimensional blueprints which are trike components sent unassembled so organizations can explore the possibility of building trikes locally. All of this has been done through HWI's growing global partnership network.

In addition to being the Founder and Executive Director of His Wheels International, Alice is the author of *Riding on Faith: Keeping Your Balance When the Wheels Fall Off* and her most recent book, *Pray 10K: How the Radical Can Become Real a 10,000-Hour Prayer Adventure*.

Alice sums up her journey simply: "Life never turns out the way we have it planned when we graduate. Embrace twists and turns and the road can become exciting. I continue dreaming and fulfilling my goals despite ME/CFS."

To learn more about His Wheels International and to support their efforts, visit hiswheels.org