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**Friends of Disabled Adults and Children Partners with Rotary Club of Buckhead  
On International Humanitarian Project**

***Medical Equipment Will Support Disabled Rehabilitation Unit in Ecuadorean Hospital***

Stone Mountain GA – (22 January 2013) – Friends of Disabled Adults and Children ([FODAC](#)), a non-profit organization providing over \$10 million annually in durable medical equipment and supplies to the disabled community, announced today a partnership with the [Rotary Club of Buckhead](#) to support a humanitarian project in Ecuador. Using funds from the Rotary Club of Buckhead and [Rotary District 6900](#) along with a matching grant from [The Rotary Foundation](#), FODAC filled two 40-foot cargo containers with medical equipment, such as wheelchairs and hospital beds, and shipped the lot to [Luis Vernaza Hospital](#) in Guayaquil, to be used in its rehabilitation unit.

“Many of the national hospitals in Ecuador are experiencing severe shortages of basic equipment, particularly hospital beds and wheelchairs,” said Chris Brand, president of FODAC. “This equipment being shipped to Guayaquil will allow the hospital there to provide service to many more patients as well as expand its rehabilitation center.”

The [Junta de Beneficencia de Guayaquil](#), a non-governmental organization (NGO), has operated four hospitals in Ecuador, including Luis Vernaza, the largest in Ecuador, since 1888. The 415 wheelchairs in the shipment, including 148 pediatric chairs, will be distributed to disabled patients who otherwise could not afford to purchase one. The Junta will operate, secure and maintain control of the wheelchairs, reporting to the [Rotary Club of Guayaquil](#) standing project committee.

The Rotary Club of Buckhead became involved in Ecuador as part of an on-going program that develops relationships with Rotary Clubs in other countries. Through contacts club members had in Ecuador, the Buckhead club reached out to the Guayaquil Rotary Club, asking if they would be interested in a “sister club” relationship. The wheelchair project was identified by the Guayaquil club as the primary need in the rehabilitation unit in the Luis Vernaza Hospital in Guayaquil.

John Hellriegel, international projects chair for the Rotary Club of Buckhead, then contacted Chris Brand and FODAC to coordinate the shipment. FODAC helped order some equipment as well as donated some, and loaded the two containers from its warehouse in Stone Mountain. In

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addition to the wheelchairs, the shipment included 11 hospital beds and 35 mattresses which were donated by FODAC.

The program also includes personnel support for the hospital. Along with the wheelchairs, the Rotary Club of Buckhead is sponsoring a vocational training team consisting of a doctor of physiatry, a physical therapist, an occupational therapist and a speech therapist. The team left Atlanta on January 5, 2013 for a two week period during which they will work alongside the Luis Vernaza Hospital rehab staff, reviewing protocols and conducting eight training sessions. In addition, the therapists will consult for a week at a children's hospital and a cancer hospital there. The doctor will conduct training sessions in pain management for a group of Guayaquil doctors.

The total cost of the Guayaquil program is over \$91,000, funded by the Buckhead Rotary Club, Rotary District 6900 and a matching grant from The Rotary Foundation.

"This is a project that will truly change lives for a long time," said Hellriegel. "The handicapped poor who are confined to bed or their homes will now have a means to exit their homes and conduct a more normal life, participating in family activities and possibly even earning a living. We are so grateful to everyone who helped bring this project together, especially Chris Brand and the folks at FODAC."

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#### **About FODAC**

Friends of Disabled Adults and Children (FODAC) helps the disabled of all ages regain their mobility, independence and quality of life. The non-profit organization provides more than \$10 million annually in refurbished home medical equipment (HME) and home modifications in Georgia and across the United States, all at little or no cost to the recipients. A pioneer in re-use, FODAC keeps 200 tons of materials out of landfills each year by refurbishing and reissuing over 400 HME items every month, and is recognized nationally for best practices. For more information, visit [www.fodac.org](http://www.fodac.org).

#### **About The Rotary Club of Buckhead**

The Rotary Club of Buckhead was founded in 1951 to unite leaders from all walks of life, amplifying the individual contributions of members to make Atlanta and the world a better place to live and to work. The club meets each Monday for a 12.15 p.m. lunch at Maggiano's Buckhead. For more information, visit [www.buckheadrotary.com](http://www.buckheadrotary.com).

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