

# SHARING *Hope* THROUGH HARDSHIP

Mapalo's joy shines through as she waits for her new wheelchair!

*Celebrating*  
**Resurrection Power**

The joy of Jesus is spreading worldwide because of you!

# from the heart

“The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you.”

ROMANS 8:11, NLT

Come with me through the dawning mist as we hurry to catch up with Mary Magdalene. She is only a few steps ahead on the garden path, weeping and overcome with sorrow. The tomb comes into view and Mary, disbelieving, rubs her wet eyes... It can't be! Why is the stone rolled away?

Mary draws a sharp breath. Maybe she shouldn't be here—especially if there are grave robbers strong enough to handle the heavy stone. She waits, then gathers herself and steps cautiously toward the open tomb. She prepares herself to view the lifeless corpse of her Beloved. Then...

“Woman why are you crying?” asks a man behind her. She turns and mistakes Him for the gardener. “Mary,” He says tenderly, and suddenly the earth shifts beneath her feet. The stunning truth breaks over her: her Lord and Savior is alive!

**This changes everything.**

When God raised His Son off of that stone-cold, gray slab and breathed life into the body of Jesus, a hundred things were set into motion. Death was conquered and our justification before God was confirmed (Romans 4:25). Believers were united to Jesus and could now experience resurrection life (Romans 6:4). When Jesus walked out of the tomb, He gave us power to say ‘no’ to sin (Philippians 3:10). His victory over death also guarantees that we, too, will one day be raised from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:20). And best of all, the resurrection marked the beginning of Christ's exalted reign (Matthew 28:18).

Jesus did what no one else could do: He remained impaled on that cruel cross, his body ripped to shreds and bleeding like a piece of slaughtered meat, all so that the demands of His Father's justice would be met. (Is this divine child abuse? No. Long before the foundation of the world, the Father and the Son agreed about the cross).

That Christ should plunge the knife in His own heart for us. The God of life



should conquer death by embracing it. Oh, Friend, “This is the foolishness of God wiser than man's wisdom... the weakness of God, stronger than man's strength.” First Corinthians 1:25 tells it straight: Christ is God's foolishness. Christ is God's weakness, and we, in all of our foolishness and weakness need Him desperately.

No wonder Mary Magdalene and the disciples ran from the empty tomb, overwhelmed with joy. You can sense their excitement. Their hearts raced and they burned with a desire to tell everyone what they saw and heard: Jesus is alive!

This Easter, join me in fanning the same flame of zeal for our victorious Lord! And thank you for helping us at Joni and Friends as we lead people with disabilities through the “valley of the shadow of their suffering” to the cross of Christ and His empty tomb.

*Joni Eareckson Tada*  
Founder, Joni and Friends

Our new President's...

# Promises to Joni— *and Jesus!*

“Just as Christ was raised from the dead...  
we too may live a new life.”

ROMANS 6:4

**F**riend, it's my honor to join Joni in proclaiming that the Lord Jesus is risen indeed! This stunning reality—the resurrection of Jesus—is the bedrock of our hope as believers. It's the death-crushing, life-giving truth that pulled Joni from despair after breaking her neck at seventeen. And it's the high-octane fuel that speeds Gospel hope to hurting people through our Joni and Friends *Retreats & Getaways*, *Wheels for the World*® outreaches, and *Joni's House*® programs that you make possible.

But when I recently asked Joni what she envisions for the ministry 25, 50, and even 75 years into the future, Joni and Friends programs weren't her primary focus. As you know, even before I tell you, Joni has one priority that transcends all the others: delivering the Gospel to struggling people, sending the news that changes everything to

suffering souls, from Zambia to Arizona and everywhere in between.

Joni looks to the future and prays that churches everywhere will say to families who struggle with disability, “You are not alone! Your suffering is not pointless! God is using this to make you like Jesus for His glory, and we promise we will walk alongside you... Because you enrich our church. Our community can't help but grow around your needs, because you teach us what sacrificial service is all about.”

Like you, I am humbled and blessed by the faithful, Christ-centered leadership and influence of Joni Eareckson Tada, within this ministry and in the countless hearts and minds she has pointed to Jesus. And as we move into the years, and even decades, to come, it is my privilege to make foundational promises—to Joni, to you, and to Jesus—about where we are headed and Whom we will always follow.



- First, I promise that Joni and Friends will not only stay a faith-based ministry, it will stay Gospel-focused, dedicated to declaring the message of Jesus Christ, our risen Savior Who is sovereign in suffering and Who brings His good purposes through our pain, disabilities, and tragedies.
- Second, I promise that our ministry will intensify our efforts to equip churches to fully embrace people with disabilities and their families.
- Third, to you, treasured friend, I promise and commit that when you support Joni and Friends with your prayers, time, talent, and treasure, you are helping to deliver the biblical truth that God's purposes are good, His promises are sure, and His joy is real, even in suffering.

Will you pray with me over these promises and ask God to carry out His kingdom work through every aspect of this ministry, now and for generations to come?

*Lord Jesus, we give thanks for Your resurrection—the gift that changes everything! Thank You for inviting us into Your kingdom purposes, sending us out to proclaim Your Gospel truth to a hurting world. Jesus, we ask for Your will to rule and guide the ministry of Joni and Friends, just as You have since the beginning. Jesus, we pray that in 2050, in 2075, and for generations to come, Joni and Friends will still be lifting high the cross, pointing people with disabilities to new life in You, in the days ahead and for all eternity. Amen.*

Shawn Thornton  
President, Joni and Friends

# Mapalo's New Wheelchair and Happiness in Jesus!

The day Mapalo and her mother, Kongwa, came to our *Wheels for the World* outreach in Zambia, they felt the presence of God. And because of you, that day, this mother and daughter discovered a bright, new season of life.

Mapalo, who lives with cerebral palsy, has never had a wheelchair. Even now as an adult, she has traveled from place to place on Kongwa's increasingly weary back. While Kongwa adores her daughter and has raised her with Christ-saturated love, Mapalo's needs represent only a fraction of her constant responsibilities.

Not only is Kongwa the sole supporter of her immediate family, she has also become the primary source of care and financial provision for her sister who has Parkinson's disease, as well as her adult children.

During the day, Kongwa sells plants to earn income for her family's many pressing needs. Meanwhile, Mapalo, often has to sit at home, unable to go out and interact with peers and use her sharp, lively conversation skills.

As our veteran volunteer, Rose, met Mapalo and Kongwa, she was immediately treated to a beautiful smile and warm hug from Mapalo. She soon discovered this radiant young lady is ready to venture into the world with more independence, sharing the love of Jesus, which has sustained her and Kongwa through many years of hardship.

"Having a wheelchair will be a blessing for Mapalo and Kongwa, who has carried her daughter on the 25-minute walk to their church just to take part in worship," says Rose. You can see the delight on Mapalo's face, soaking in the love of Jesus as our Joni and Friends team carefully fitted her for her first wheelchair.

And Kongwa has a word of thanks for you, who sent her beautiful daughter a new lease on life and a reminder of Jesus's unfailing love. "I am so grateful for your generosity, which has given Mapalo happiness and independence. Thank you is not enough. No words are enough!"

Now, Mapalo and Kongwa can't wait to spread the word about the love of Jesus that you delivered to their family! Because of your faithfulness, they will remind their friends that God is always faithful, giving Him all the glory!

**Thank you for sending new life in Jesus to Mapalo and Kongwa. Please join us in praying for this precious family, as Kongwa has asked, that she will find the strength and means in Christ to continue to love and bless her daughter and all those in her care.**

"I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you... and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead..."

EPHESIANS 1:18-20





## You Sent Favour the Life-saving *Love of Jesus!*

**S**ix-year-old Favour in Uganda almost didn't get a chance at life. At birth, he was nearly asphyxiated. And while he eventually began breathing, his early oxygen deprivation caused permanent disabilities. Diagnosed with severe spastic cerebral palsy, Favour has required intensive hands-on care since his infancy. When he was just three months old, his father abandoned the family.

Growing crops for subsistence, Favour's mother and grandmother, who share in his caregiving, could not afford medical care, let alone the wheelchair Favour would need to give him mobility and safety. But when they heard about a Joni and Friends *Wheels for the World* outreach in Uganda, God showed Favour's family a fresh horizon of hopeful possibilities...

When our team assessed Favour and custom-fitted a wheelchair just for him, a transformation began. Recognizing Favour's need for physical therapy, our team introduced his family to *Joni's House* Uganda, where they discovered holistic care, all provided in the name of Jesus!

While Favour gained strength and mobility through physical therapy sessions at *Joni's House*, and experienced a warm embrace from

the community, his mother and grandmother received financial support and opportunities to earn income. In addition to providing animals through our region-specific husbandry project, our team constructed a ramp at Favour's home, making it wheelchair-accessible like never before.

And Friend, you not only sent Favour and his family a wheelchair, a new ramp, and high-quality services to transform their daily life—you also made life-saving measures possible when Favour fell dangerously ill...

**When Favour's life hung in the balance, with malaria exacerbating his seizures, putting him in critical condition, you sent the help he needed! Our *Joni's House* team arranged for transportation and payment for Favour to be admitted to the hospital, where around-the-clock medical care stabilized his body.**

**Today, with Favour home and recovering—and still experiencing love through the *Joni's House* community—his family sends their gratitude to you, for your prayers, support, and love, which sustained Favour's life and renewed their confidence in Jesus!**

# Families are being transformed *through you!*

**A**pril is Global Volunteer Month, and our volunteers are indispensable friends of Joni and Friends! Like Rose, our beloved volunteer who has served on more than 35 *Wheels for the World* outreaches around the world over the past three decades!

Thank you to all our faithful volunteers... Your prayers, time volunteering, and financial generosity speed the Good News of Jesus to children and families at home and across the globe! Joni, Shawn, and our whole Joni and Friends team praise God for the kingdom impact you make possible!



## Bless your loved ones & share the love of Jesus!

Your gift given in honor or in memory of a loved one brings the hope of the Gospel to people living with disabilities worldwide! View your loved one's name on our online Tribute Wall at [joniandfriends.org/tribute](http://joniandfriends.org/tribute) or by using this QR code!



# New Life in Jesus...

## From Texas ▼

When Elyse and Keith found out about our Joni and Friends *Family Retreat*, they couldn't imagine the gift God had in store for them. With five children under the age of ten, Judah, Sandrina, Jones, Boaz, and Davi, three of whom have disabilities, Elyse and Keith have relied on God's provision to navigate the complexities of daily life.

When Judah was a baby, Elyse and Keith adopted three-year-old Sandrina, who has cerebral palsy, from Uganda. While living in Uganda, Elyse and Keith continued to grow their family, welcoming Jones and then Boaz, their miracle baby who wasn't expected to survive birth, but is now five years old!

Finally, Elyse and Keith felt called to adopt Davi, a seven-year-old boy from Haiti who is non-verbal and uses a wheelchair—and is full of energy! Managing their household packed with diverse cultural backgrounds, complex disabilities, and intensive medical needs, Elyse and Keith longed for an experience of deep rest and

belonging, which is just what you provided through *Family Retreat*!

At their first *Family Retreat*, Elyse and Keith watched each of their children click with their dedicated volunteer. "They loved our kids so well," says Elyse. "And our family didn't have to work to fit in. Instead, the community surrounded us and accommodated our unique needs."

With their children having the time of their lives, Elyse and Keith got rare and precious rest, walks, and quality time as a couple. They also enjoyed deep conversations with people who understand their biggest challenges firsthand. "We didn't know how raw our hearts were," says Elyse. "But God knew and He opened the door for us to find restoration."

**Thank you for providing encouragement and hope to families living with disability, all in the name of Jesus!**



# Delivered Through You!

## From Arizona ▼

For years, Dan and Brandy, and their daughters, Savannah (20) and Andi (18), bore the weight of isolation. With Andi's significant physical and intellectual disabilities and medical challenges caused by a rare genetic disorder, finding a welcoming church felt impossible. "People didn't know how to support us," Brandy says, "so they often kept their distance."

Without close Christian community, Dan and Brandy struggled. "The lack of support added to an already stressful situation," Dan says. But then, at a Joni and Friends respite event, held poolside, God provided a turning point for Andi's family.

Attuned to her needs and responses, our team helped Andi overcome her fear and step into the pool. Then, she didn't want to leave! Brandy says, "That moment gave us hope that we could attend more events like this in the future."

Soon, the hope that budded at our respite event bloomed at *Family Retreat*. "We could finally let our guard down," shared Dan and Brandy. Surrounded

by other families with shared faith and understanding, Andi's family experienced freedom, belonging, and the joy of simply being themselves.

Andi especially loved the arts and crafts room. By the end of the week, her drawings filled the walls, forming her very own art gallery. Asked what made her feel brave at *Family Retreat*, Andi answered simply: "Friends." Savannah watched it all unfold with joy. "Seeing her branch out in such a social setting is something I only dreamed of," Savannah said. "She felt seen and appreciated, and that made me so happy."

*Family Retreat* also strengthened Dan and Brandy's marriage. And later, at our *Marriage Getaway*, celebrating 22 years together, they shared how far Jesus has carried them, pouring out wisdom and encouragement to younger couples navigating life with disability.

**Hallelujah to our risen Savior who changes everything! Thank you for sending His transforming love through your prayers and support!**



# Mother's Day Gifts that Share God's Glory...

## Occasion Notecards

### VARIETY PACK

Brighten someone's day with a meaningful card featuring artwork by Joni and encouraging Scripture. This 20-card & envelope set includes five (5" x 7") cards each of four designs:

**Happy Birthday featuring "Farmhouse on a Hill"**

"This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it."  
Psalm 118:24, NLT

**Thank You featuring "The Pasture Road"**

"I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers." Ephesians 1:16

**Praying for You featuring "Country Church"**

"Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way." 2 Thessalonians 3:16

**Blank (with Scripture inside) featuring "Fishing on the Lake"**

"May all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you." Psalm 40:16



**\$18**

## MAJESTIC MOUNTAIN Cutting Board

This elegant cutting board makes the perfect gift for any occasion. It features Joni's inspiring "Majestic Mountain" artwork, and the encouraging words of Psalm 36:5,6: "Your love, O LORD, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies. Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains."

**Product Details:**

- Made from durable high-quality cherry wood
- Food safe, environmentally friendly, and made with wood sourced exclusively from North America.
- Size: 8" x 17" x 3/4"

**\$48**



*100% of proceeds directly advances ministry to children and families living with disability.*

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