



CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL REHABILITATION

November 2006

Dear Friend:

On behalf of all of us at the Center for International Rehabilitation, best wishes for a joyous holiday season.

This past year saw both important advancements and continued challenges for people with disabilities. With the generous support of our donors, the CIR has continued to work toward its mission of assisting people with disabilities worldwide in achieving their full potential. I'm proud to share a few recent highlights with you.

In August, the United Nations adopted a draft text of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, a historic step that will provide an international legal framework to protect the human rights of individuals with disabilities. As an active participant in Convention negotiations, this was a tremendous achievement for the CIR, as well as for people with disabilities around the world.

Work on the CIR's International Disability Rights Monitor (IDRM) continued with the launch of the *Regional Report of Europe* in January of 2006. Prior to beginning their reports, the European researchers participated in a new online curriculum created by the CIR. The course provided information about the international disability rights framework, as well as interactive learning activities and practice with key research skills.

In September, the CIR signed an agreement with the Burton Blatt Institute (BBI) of Syracuse University to work collaboratively to expand the scope and reach of the IDRM project. This exciting new partnership will bring the legal expertise and institutional resources of BBI together with the program experience and international networks of the CIR. Joint work on the IDRM is already off to an impressive start.

The CIR's education programs continue to demonstrate success. In January, the International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics (ISPO), a leading certification body, awarded Category II certification to 17 graduates of the CIR's prosthetics education program in Bosnia & Herzegovina. This marked the first time that students in Eastern Europe received ISPO certification in prosthetics.

The CIR's Distance Learning Department recently developed a new program called Train-the-Trainer. Through Train-the-Trainer, the CIR distributes its educational materials and expertise to other nonprofit organizations so that they can provide upgrade training to prosthetic technicians, thereby improving amputee care. Two organizations, Healing Hands for Haiti and Range of Motion Project, are now using the program to educate prosthetists in Central America and the Caribbean.

In January, the CIR launched the International Disability Educational Alliance Network (IDEAnet), an interactive website that provides information, communication tools, and social

spaces designed to enable people from around the world to work together on issues of importance to individuals with disabilities. The site is designed around two communities: Rehabilitation Services and Disability Rights. In the upcoming year, the CIR hopes to expand website membership and encourage increased participation in this exciting project.

The CIR made advances in the past year toward the development of improved prosthetics and wheelchairs for use in developing countries. CIR researchers have made additional improvements to the CIR-Wu Casting System, which provides a fast and inexpensive method of creating artificial limbs. Researchers also completed a field study in Nicaragua to evaluate three new alignment systems for fitting below-knee prostheses. The results of this research are being used to devise a cost-effective and portable system for making well-aligned, comfortable, single-unit prostheses called monolimbs.

In addition, the CIR partnered with Whirlwind Wheelchair International and Motivation Charitable Trust to form a consortium of international organizations to develop "Guidelines on the Provision of Manual Wheelchairs in Less Resourced Settings." The guidelines will enable wheelchair providers to use an objective standard for the selection and delivery of wheelchairs, leading to more professional, comprehensive, and effective wheelchair services. In collaboration with the World Health Organization, the consortium completed the first draft of the guidelines this year, and presented an overview at the ISPO Consensus Conference on Wheelchairs for Developing Countries in November. The full guidelines will be presented at the 12th World Congress of the ISPO in July 2007.

The continued work of the CIR is not possible without support from generous donors like you. As you consider your year-end charitable giving, please remember people with disabilities in low-income countries, and help them through a generous gift to the Center for International Rehabilitation.

Thank you and Happy Holidays!



William Kennedy Smith, M.D.
Chairman

P.S. In addition to giving by check or credit card, the CIR can receive gifts of stock. Please check with your own financial advisors, as it may be advantageous to give appreciated securities rather than cash.