

# The 150th Load

Saturday 23rd March, marked another milestone for PhysioNet, when we loaded our 150th consignment to 31 countries since 2009. This time the Tigray Development Association International (TDAI) in Makelle, Tigray Province, Ethiopia, will be the recipient and the third consignment they have taken.

From our perspective TDAI and the tight-knit Tigray community in the UK constitute an ideal recipient. The photo below includes a good number of Tigray people, some of whom had come from London and Edinburgh, proudly waving their flag.

'Muscle' provided by half-a-dozen Tigray men proved invaluable as the container, which had been pre-loaded from a facility in Leeds, needed to be partially unloaded before being filled with the most suitable equipment.



A challenging journey lies ahead. North Yorkshire to a UK port. Then, because of problems in the Red Sea, the long way round by sea via the Cape to Djibouti. Finally the 660km overland to Makelle. It is not surprising then that this, and the two previous shipments, cost nearly £30k! (These costs were paid promptly by a Tigray charity in London.)

The photo above shows Dr. Abraha Derso and his wife Sharon, cutting a special cake. The cake was our way of expressing our appreciation for them mobilizing Tigrayan support in UK and also for their contacts in Makelle, essential for getting the first consignment safely to destination. Without their help these shipments simply would not have happened.

## Meet Ayuna

In Newsletter 26 we reported giving a wheelchair to Ayuna, an impressive 22 year old paraplegic woman from Buryatia in Siberia. It appears our gift paid dividends as you can hear in Ayuna's own words.

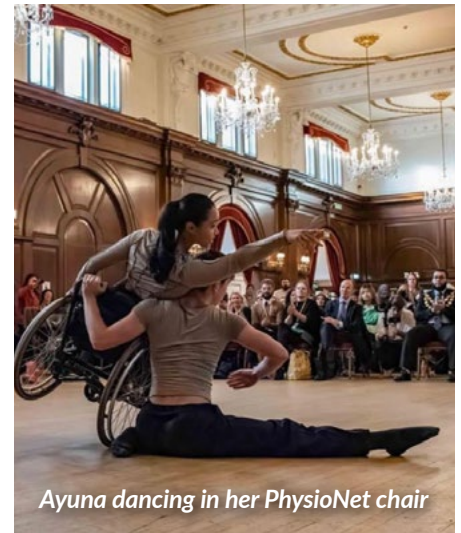
*"In a previous letter I didn't really mention all my gratitude and appreciation for the wheelchair that you gave me. Thank you very, very much! I have been using it for the past year and in all this time I feel absolute and boundless freedom!*

*On a visit to Manchester I had my first ballroom dancing class. I dreamed of trying dancing in a wheelchair and I finally succeeded! In that wheelchair I started a completely new chapter in my life, as a professional wheelchair dancer. I won*

*a dance competition for people with disabilities "Dance Westminster" and I did it in your wheelchair!*

*Afterwards I took part in a number of training workshops around the country. I was working as an assistant in "Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance". We were introducing students to dance involving physically disabled people. I also finished the first year of a programme for young choreographers. Then last April I toured with the UK's first all-wheelchair dance company "Propel Dance", where we re-imagined the fantastical fairytale 'The Snow Queen'.*

*Hopefully next year there will be an opportunity to do a tour around the whole UK. I was also selected and accepted into the National Dance Youth Company!*



*Ayuna dancing in her PhysioNet chair*

*I just have no more words, all these amazing moments happened thanks to you and your truly significant gift! Thank you very much! I certainly wouldn't have done any of this without your help!"*

## Romania update

Two physio volunteers, Heather and Victoria, recently completed a training course hosted by the Maria Beatrice centre in Alba Iulia Romania. Some of the participants were from neighbouring Moldova.



There were two spare standing frames at the Romanian centre which fitted into the cars of the Moldovans. Two days later they were in use! Before receiving the equipment, neither child had the experience of standing.

As you see, the little girl (right) was very happy with the result and her mum was amazed! They took the stander home with them and will be followed up in two months. The little boy (left) can now access all areas of the rehabilitation centre in the stander, and can reach and play much more than he could when he was lying down.

*"Thank you for this amazing gift!"* was the response from the paediatrician Dr. Gincota.



## Annual Review 2023

On Saturday 16th March we held our first Annual Review at Knaresborough Golf Club. This event occurred exactly four years to the day since our last AGM on 14th March 2020, just a day before the first Covid lockdown. The year reviewed was 2023 and a handout at the meeting detailed activity during the 'lost years' of 2020/21 and 2022 when there were no AGMs.

In 2017, PhysioNet changed its structure from an association to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation

(CIO), which operates more like a limited company. Technically a CIO does not require an AGM, however we believe that not reporting to our supporters on activities in the previous year is a mistake which has now been corrected.

The review started with a welcome by Chairman David Kaye, who then presented our current promotional PowerPoint. The meeting then received reports from all branches of PhysioNet and covered finance, collections, shipments, physiotherapy and updates from the South West, South East and Scotland. A special item was Ukraine to emphasise the lack of funding for

shipments, which is hindering our ongoing support. After the review, a hot buffet lunch was served.

2023 was the busiest year to date with 18 consignments to ten countries of which six were loaded from PhysioNet SW and SE. (Ukraine 7, South Africa 2, Fiji 2 and one each to Ecuador, Ethiopia, Kenya, Moldova, Romania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.) A total of 11,469 items. The major problem was a shortage of funds for Ukraine towards the end of the year and the Romania consignment in February demonstrated how difficult it can be to send items to EU post-Brexit.

## Good to see ...

We do not always get to see how the equipment we supply benefits recipients as it is often distributed by third party charities and NGOs that we do not necessarily have a direct relationship with. It is with great pleasure then that we received a video featuring a young gentleman and his father who are benefiting greatly from a wheelchair shipped by PhysioNet to Kenya. You can watch it on YouTube by scanning the QR code below or with this link

[bit.ly/3PGNsNy](https://bit.ly/3PGNsNy)



## The UN has decreed

PhysioNet has only recently discovered that our stock in trade is Assistive technology (AT), which covers all of the adult and paediatric therapy equipment we handle. AT is an umbrella term which the UN defines as “Technology adapted or specifically designed to improve the functioning of people with disabilities.” We think our sub title “Helping people with disabilities overseas” sounds a little better than “Suppliers of AT to MLIC”!

## Good luck Valerie!

Valerie Kaye, the wife of our Chairman, is walking 26 miles on 19th May to raise funds for a shipment to Ukraine, which currently costs around £5,000. She will be taking part in the annual Nidderdale Walk & Run organised by the Rotary Club of Harrogate and will walk from Pateley Bridge to Angram Dam and back. Details have been circulated to PhysioNet contacts. For further information contact David on [david.kaye@physionet.org.uk](mailto:david.kaye@physionet.org.uk).



## Shipments

Oct 23–Mar 24

The following shipments were made from October 2023 to the end of March 2024. A total of 5,665 items, including 502 wheelchairs and 632 items of therapy equipment, were loaded into two HGVs, five 40 ft and one 20 ft container.



**Ukraine.** The first of two consignments, was loaded on 28th October from Yorkshire. Destination a military hospital in Zaporizhzhia.



**South Africa.** The first consignment to this country since May 2022, was loaded from Yorkshire on 2nd December. The destination was the town of White River and a mixed paediatric/adult load for Paediatric Care Africa and the local Rotary club. Funding came from the recipients



**South Africa.** The second consignment to South Africa, was loaded from PhysioNet (SW) on 9th December. The destination was Durban and another mixed paediatric/adult load for Khetiwe (Rehabilitation Centre for Children with Disabilities) and the Chatsworth Rotary club. A donor in UK covered the shipping costs



**Zimbabwe.** This the thirteenth consignment to Zimbabwe, was loaded from Yorkshire on 20th January. Destination Harare and another mixed paediatric/adult load for RESCU and St. Christopher's Home. As before the costs to destination were met by an international charity with links to Zimbabwe.



**Ukraine.** This the second Ukraine consignment was finally loaded from PhysioNet (SE) on 27th January, again for Zaporizhzhia. Loading was delayed for over a month, as the trucking company reported problems at the border with long queues of vehicles waiting to enter Ukraine.



**Ethiopia.** The first consignment to Ethiopia was loaded from Yorkshire on 15th July 2023 and should have been reported in the last Newsletter. It arrived safely, but only after coping with many bureaucratic problems. This, the second consignment was again loaded from Yorkshire on 24th February destined for the Tigray Development Association International (TDAI) in Makelle. A challenging loading in UK, but with fewer problems in Ethiopia than the first consignment.



**Kenya.** A 20ft non-returnable container was loaded on 9th March from Yorkshire, although the vessel only sailed on 23rd March. As before the consignment was partly funded by the British Army with the recipient being a charity near Eldoret.



**Ethiopia.** The third of these consignments was loaded on 23rd March from Yorkshire, again destined for TDAI in Makelle. It was PhysioNet's 150th load and is described in more detail on page one.



**Ukraine.** Scheduled to load from PhysioNet (SE) on 23rd March, this should have been the 15th consignment to Ukraine since the war began. It should also have been PhysioNet's 150th load, an honour shared with Ethiopia as described on page one. In the event the loading was cancelled at the eleventh hour, with the trucking company reported a 1,500 queue of vehicles at the Polish border.

**Third party shipments.** A modest four collections totalling 29 items, were collected from Yorkshire for Ghana, Malawi, Yemen and Zambia.

## SPECIAL APPEAL

# Please help us to help Ukraine

The war in Ukraine has become much less prominent in our news media. However the conflict rages on and we are told by our contacts in the country that the need for medical and physiotherapy equipment has never been greater.

In April 2022 soon after the start of the war, we delivered our first consignment of medical hardware and supplies to a military hospital in Lviv. Four further consignments followed that year and because we use Ukraine registered 55 ft "artics" and Ukrainian drivers, it was possible to deliver to Kyiv, Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia etc.

Unlike our usual shipments when the recipients pay for transportation, (about £5.0 k per load) we have to find these costs ourselves and fortunately the necessary funds came from Rotary organisations or commercial companies.

A similar story for the first six shipments last year, most of which were loaded from PhysioNet SE and SW. However by September funds had dried up and there was no guarantee of future Rotary grants. Fortunately two charities came up trumps – we are very grateful to both Mail Force and the Persula Foundation.

**Mail Force**

**PERSULA**  
FOUNDATION 



Volunteers in Yorkshire packing for Ukraine, Jan 2023



A Ukraine bound lorry with its Ukrainian driver (left) and volunteer Elina Kyrychok (right), Jan 2023.

Their input enabled us to send consignments last October and this January as well as two anticipated shipments in April. Assuming all goes well, we will have sent 15 consignments to Ukraine since the start of the war. So a lot of kit. 15 "artics" equates to 24 x 40 ft containers, with a new value in the UK of £2.4 million.

**We are proud of our support for Ukraine and all of us want it to continue beyond April. So this spring we are calling for donations to help with the cost of shipping to Ukraine. If you feel you can help, or know anyone else that can, please use or share the bank details below to send funds.**

Please advise our Treasurer Carl Stitt ([carl.stitt@physionet.org.uk](mailto:carl.stitt@physionet.org.uk)) that the money is on its way.

Thank you for helping us help Ukraine.

## GET INVOLVED & DONATE

If you would like to get involved please contact:

**Peter Thompson** at [peter.thompson@physionet.org.uk](mailto:peter.thompson@physionet.org.uk) / 01423 322736 or  
**Milton Fray** at [milton.fray@physionet.org.uk](mailto:milton.fray@physionet.org.uk) / 07765 548196

Individual donations are very important to us. Our **HSBC** bank details are: Account Name: **Physionet foundation CIO**. Sort code: **40-23-12**. Account no: **72496194**. Alternatively donate via **Now Donate** using the link on our website.



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