

Seeing the World is Possible!

When I graduated high school, I remember the last couple of weeks of school being a time where students spoke about their plans and teachers wished us all bright and fruitful futures. One teacher specifically, who taught technology and computers, asked the whole class one day to write down three goals they had for the future. On my list was graduating college, living on my own and traveling to beautiful places around the world. As he walked around the class, looking at student's bucket lists, he gave positive feedback and words of encouragement to many. When he saw my list, however, his attitude changed. "Travel the world, huh? I've traveled hundreds of times and let me tell you. With that thing (reference to my motorized wheelchair) you won't be able to go anywhere." His negative words surprised me and to this day I remember the shock I felt. Thankfully, instead of hearing his ignorant statement as truth, I used it as fuel for a life of adventure!



Maui and The Pacific Ocean

While I haven't yet traveled to Europe, these wheels have been to some amazing places in my short 32 years of life. I've lived in five states including New York City and a small, classic southern called Beaumont, Texas. As an adult, I've traveled with family to Puerto Rico, Boston (multiple times), Chicago, San Francisco, The Bahamas, Mexico and my ultimate favorite, Maui, Hawaii. The hike to Maui was the most challenging – requiring that we take three planes there and back. However, one breath of Hawaii air and just the slightest glance of the Pacific Ocean made the entire 15 hrs in-flight worth every second. I had a spiritual experience in Maui and will forever be grateful for the island's spirit.

Sage Traveling

There are a number of different travel agencies and resources available for individuals using a wheelchair to access for trips domestically and internationally, one of my favorites being Sage Traveling. Here's some additional information on this awesome travel agency:

Sage Traveling: "Sage Traveling is committed to providing customized, truly accessible holiday travel for our disabled and elderly clients. We deal exclusively in accessible travel to European destinations, and make it our job to understand all the challenges that disabled travelers may encounter during their trip and how to overcome them. Not only do we plan your worry-free accessible vacation, we also offer comprehensive,



detailed, and organized disabled travel information on accessible European tourist attractions, ports, hotels, and transportation. Founder and Owner John Sage was injured in a snow-skiing accident in 2001 when he was 22 years old and sustained a T-4 incomplete spinal cord injury. He has some sensation but uses a wheelchair to get around. John quickly adapted to his new lifestyle and retained his passion for life. Since 2001, he has **visited Europe 16 times to over 140+ cities in his wheelchair.**

Read more <http://www.sagetraveling.com/about>

Happy Traveling!

Author: Lorinda Gonzalez resides in South Florida with her family and service dog, Remy. She was diagnosed with Spinal Muscular Atrophy at the age of three, and has used a motorized wheelchair for mobility since the age of nine. As an avid writer and reader, she has worked as a grant writer and editor since 2009. She recently participated in Bold Beauty Project where she was a model supporting the cause of showcasing women with disabilities and beautiful and sexy. Lorinda holds a Bachelor in the Arts Degree in English Writing and Rhetoric, and is currently completing a Masters of Arts Degree in Communications. She is a co-founder of NMD United, a 501c3 and on the board of multiple non-profit organizations. In her free time, Lorinda enjoys spending time with family and friends, painting, listening to music, and traveling to historical locations.