Assembly Resolution No. 620

BY: M. of A. Aubry

MEMORIALIZING Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim September 7, 2023, as Wheelchair Charities Day in the State of New York

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize days set aside to acknowledge those illustrious organizations which serve their communities unrelentingly, making life more fair, just, and equitable for everyone, regardless of ability, race, gender, status, or background; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim September 7, 2023, as Wheelchair Charities Day in the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Founder of Wheelchair Charities, Inc., Henry J. Carter, commonly known as "Hank," saw an opportunity to make an impact in the lives of countless people, namely teens and young adults, who he noticed filled the Young Adults Ward at Goldwater Hospital on Roosevelt Island due to gunshot wounds; and

WHEREAS, Henry J. Carter started a fundraising basketball game with the best high school players from Queens (Queens United) playing against Brooklyn's best high school athletes (Brooklyn USA); the first game was held in 1974, and with much traction and popularity, the fundraiser grabbed the attention of sponsors such as Pony and Nike, allowing Wheelchair Charities, Inc. to grow rapidly; and

WHEREAS, The founder of the charity also found great support and friendship in the people he met and worked with at the Long Island Savings Bank where he started as a teller and rose to be senior Vice President; in 1979, with the first million-dollar donation the charity ever received, coming from a generous Bob Dudley, Wheelchair Charities, Inc. was able to purchase handicap-equipped buses and computers for the Goldwater hospital patients and residents; and

WHEREAS, Fundraising dinners, high school basketball games, and gospel shows became annual events, growing more popular and raising more funds every year; in 1990, Wheelchair Charities, Inc. held a basketball game in Madison Square Garden for the first time; the annual event at the Garden continued for 14 incredible years; Gala Dinners proved to be even more lucrative, bringing in between $800,000 and $1 million dollars a year; and

WHEREAS, Henry J. Carter was thrilled when he learned that the new city hospital in Harlem would be named in his honor; NYC Health + Hospitals/Henry J. Carter Specialty Hospital and Nursing Facility, opened on August 21, 2013, and initially served many of the patients and residents from Goldwater Hospital, which closed on December 31, 2013; and

WHEREAS, This year the charity plans to purchase 110 new, motorized wheelchairs for people in every borough of New York City, as well as to purchase a new bus to transport wheelchair-bound patients; being an organization run solely by volunteers has allowed the group to donate over $30 million in the past 50 years to improve and enhance the lives of people in wheelchairs; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that when individuals and organizations of such noble aims and accomplishments are brought to our attention, they should be celebrated and recognized by all the citizens of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim September 7, 2023, as Wheelchair Charities Day in the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Governor Kathy Hochul, and Henry J. Carter, Founder of Wheelchair Charities, Inc.