

Thathel

PET Mobility Project

PET Ministries, Inc.
Wheatfield, IN
with
The Luke Commission,
Compassionate Medicine

Swaziland
(in southern Africa)
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Waiting . . . For A Promised Roadside Gift

He waited patiently that day on the roadside. He had been waiting patiently for weeks. He trusted TLC, but he was a little anxious and definitely excited. Mfanawenkhosi Hlatjawko, known as Thathel in his Swazi community, was to meet two Luke Commission staff members this morning on a dusty road five kilometers from his house.

His first cart had given him the freedom to move around and to take care of himself; he said it made him feel like a man again. Thathel had driven to a TLC outreach earlier that month in his original PET. There the TLC doctor agreed that Thathel needed a new cart since he had put so many kilometers on his old PET — at least five kilometers every day — but there were no PETs right now.

Then he saw them coming. "I knew you were the Good Samaritan," Thathel said, "you had come to help." That "help" came in the form of a new PET cart from TLC and PET-Demotte, an Indiana team of volunteers that builds, donates, and ships the mobility carts. TLC had just received a new shipment from PET-Demotte for Thathel and many other patients who were waiting.

Thathel has not walked since he was 24 years old. First his legs started to cramp. Then he got sick, and his legs "stopped working." Now at age 35, he is on anti-retroviral medications and looks quite healthy. His arms are still strong - a perfect candidate for a PET cart that uses upper body strength to move the cart. "I like my old cart," he told TLC, "but I'm shocked to see the new one."

Thathel lives with his parents. He never married but has two children, a son age 12 and daughter age 6. His girlfriend and mother of his children died last year. A cousin, who had accompanied Thathel to drive the old cart home, helped the disabled man climb into the new cart.

The new PETs from the PET Affiliate in the adjoining towns of Demotte and Wheatfield, Indiana, have been remodeled to be sturdier, more functional, and definitely more colorful.

Each of the 22 PET Affiliates builds its own carts. Standards are high and uniform, but PET-Demotte has taken their style to a new level. Every cart is put together and tested before being taken apart again and boxed for shipment overseas. Extra care is taken painting all the wood parts.



"I didn't expect the new cart to be that nice," laughed Thathel. "I would like to thank the people in America who made these chairs," Thathel said. "And I thank almighty God that he has let me see people with good hearts in The Luke Commission, who come to me."

When necessary, Thathel said he will use the parts on his old PET to keep his new PET in good repair. He painted 'Toyota' on the back of his old PET, but smiled when he said now he has a Mercedes Benz.

"Praise the Lord for giving The Luke Commission the power to help others. May it not stop with me. May others get help, too."

That power comes from above, and from partners such as PET-Demotte, PET International, and Free Wheelchair Missions. We are privileged to meet these grateful recipients—and we want to share this with you!

—by Janet Tuinstra for **The Luke Commission** everywhere. Thank you **God**, and thank you to our **Partners!**

