

I recently returned from Deschapelles, Haiti, with my efforts centered at Hospital Albert Schweitzer (HAS), where I had the opportunity to work in the Hanger Clinic. This clinic has recently been established by the Haitian Amputee Coalition. While there, I had the opportunity to work with amazing people who have endured amputations, orthopedic injuries, strokes, burns, and spinal cord injuries. Currently, I am employed as a Physical Therapist in a Seating Clinic with a focus on prescribing wheelchairs for people with all diagnoses including spinal cord injuries, brain injuries, orthopedic limitations, congenital diseases, and other neurological conditions. Prior to my arrival in Deschapelles, I was convinced that I could teach someone to be independently maneuvering their wheelchair on any terrain. I knew there would be limitations, but I had no idea how many. It was almost impossible to push a manual wheelchair independently, even using the wheelie position. It was frustrating for the patient, the family, and me as a health care professional.

During my stay, I met a gentleman who is a bilateral above knee amputee. In his circumstance, he was never provided the opportunity to obtain prosthetic limbs. So, he turned to an alternate form of mobility, the Personal Energy Transportation, or P.E.T cart. This is where HAS came into the picture. As discussed by Shaun Cleaver, Coordinator of Rehabilitation Services Development Hospital Albert Schweitzer Haiti, these carts were provided by a "local disabled persons' organization [DPO], a combined effort that maximized resources and helped empower the DPO." Michelet utilized this P.E.T cart for his primary mobility and accessed his entire community with this device. Upon seeing this and noting the struggles that a person would have if they needed wheeled mobility, it motivated me to use my resources at HAS to obtain an additional

P.E.T cart for another patient, Melita. Shaun Cleaver assisted in the attainment of the cart and we provided it to Melita on the last day that I was in Deschapelles. She was provided amazing housing by the community of HAS; however, she was unable to leave her home, due to the terrain she had to cross to access the water pump, bathroom facilities, and cultural center. We performed a two-person lift into the cart, positioned her legs, assessed her balance, and used a sheet as a positioning belt. Melita was able to leave her front porch, and drive the P.E.T cart throughout her community at HAS with minimal assistance. She was so excited that she wanted to continue her training well after our session had finished. HAS was kind enough to donate this P.E.T. cart for Melita to use when she returned home after stay at L'Ecale.

When I returned back to Atlanta, I was so impressed by the increased mobility these assistive devices provided, that I did an internet search and came across PET-TN Murfreesboro. I contacted their office to discuss my impression of this P.E.T. cart. I received immediate response from Freddie Brown and Von Driggs requesting that I share my experience. This device provides the ability to restore independent function and mobility to a strong and resilient people, thereby improving their quality of life.

Thank you for all the work you do.

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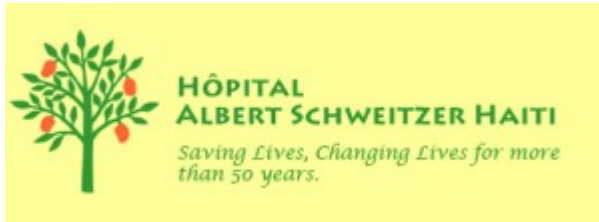


Michlet with his P.E.T. Cart and Prostheses.



Melita and her brother outside of L'Escale

The following Links are in support of the Haitian Amputee Coalition and allowed me to have this life-changing experience.



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