

P.E.T. Partners with Samaritan's Purse

Liberia — Giving a Future and a Hope

(Reprinted with permission from Samaritan's Purse, Vol. 9, No. 2, March/April 2007)

"Do you remember me?" the smiling young man in the hand-cranked wheelchair asked a worker from Samaritan's Purse.

Six months earlier, Samaritan's Purse had given wheelchairs to a number of people in his city in northern Liberia. Now, workers had returned to Gbarnga to distribute school supplies.

The disabled man identified himself as Romeo Karmue. Crippled as a child, he had been unable to walk without crutches for the past 19 years. The day he received his wheelchair was a turning point in his life — in more ways than one.

The Liberian Christians who brought the wheelchairs to Gbarnga also shared the Gospel that day. When they gave the invitation, Romeo quietly prayed in his heart, confessing his sins and accepting Jesus as his Lord and Savior.

Since then, God has been working to transform Romeo's life. He became an active member of a church that runs a school for vulnerable members of the community. The wheelchair is helping to make it possible for him to finish his education, and he looks forward to a career as a tailor.

"I am really thankful to God and to Samaritan's Purse for making me a changed person," he said.

As Liberia emerges from more than a decade of brutal civil war, thousands of young people are dealing with disabilities. Some were child soldiers. Others were maimed by landmines. Without the help they need to obtain work or complete their education, many of them face lives of poverty and despair.

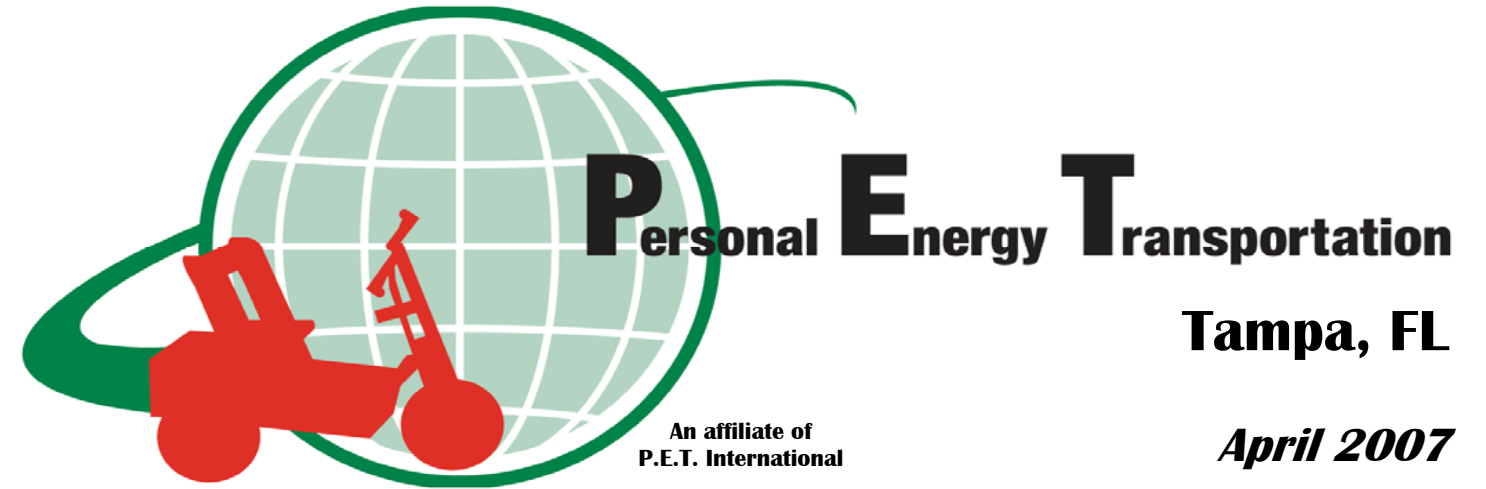
Samaritan's Purse, working through local churches, has provided wheelchairs for hundreds of Liberians such as Romeo to help them overcome their disabilities. However, it is through the sharing of the Gospel that we are able to offer them a far greater hope. As the Bible says, "Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John 5:5, NKJV).



Romeo appreciates his wheelchair, but the greatest gift he received was salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.



**P.E.T. Project
P.O. Box 2105
Tampa, FL 33601**



Honduras Shipwreck Tragedy

The Tampa P.E.T. Project sends these unique wheel chairs to third world countries all over the world to victims of land mines, polio, animal attacks and other illness and injury. On our most recent shipment to Honduras, we were working with the humanitarian organization "Corazon a Corazon" (Heart to Heart), which is led by Dr. Stephen Foster from Dalton, Georgia. The organization was granted the use of a returning empty shipping container from the Standard Fruit (Dole) corporation from here in the states.

Dr. Foster uses a World War II LCM85 landing craft boat donated to Heart to Heart by the U.S. His organization provides the only freight service to the Mosquito Indians, a discriminated against people who live along the 250 mile rugged and underdeveloped eastern coast of Honduras. He has provided medical services and 20 P.E.T. wheel chairs to the estimated 1,000 paralyzed lobster

divers along that coast. The divers have been paralyzed after suffering the bends, which occurs from surfacing too rapidly from the 80-100 foot depths where they search for lobsters with primitive equipment from a foreign company mother ship. The paralyzed divers have found that these P.E.T. wheel chairs stand up to the harsh conditions and are the most beneficial in traversing the un paved terrain in Honduras.

A team of three from the U.S. including myself (Jeff Sukup, Director of the Tampa P.E.T. Project) joined Dr. Foster and a crew of 4 at the Standard Fruit Company facilities in Puerto Limpira. The 40 foot banana container was filled full of medical supplies, clothing, bicycles, cement, diesel fuel, bottled soft drinks and medical supplies, and 50 P.E.T. wheel chairs in both adult and child sizes. Our mission was to take a 15 hour overnight boat trip to Belen on this remote part of the coast and distribute



The boat filled with items as they left port.

these valuable items to the lobster divers and their families. We set off at 4pm in calm seas, but 8 hours into the trip around midnight we encountered 12 to 15 foot seas. The pitching and rolling of the boat in the waves broke the cable holding the loading ramp in the bow of the craft. At this point, we decided to head back to port for repairs since no repair station would be available in the remote area we were traveling to. But after further pounding from the high seas, the safety chains also broke causing the 14 foot wide gate of the loading ramp to drop straight down into the sea. Immediately, the water came rushing into our cargo hold and this very nearly overturned us and stopped all forward movement. All the cargo, except for the cement, starting floating out to sea and most of it sank as it became water logged.

Dr. Foster estimated we had passed a river mouth four miles back and if we could reverse back to it and successfully cross the shallow bar that the river had created a mile out into the sea, we could back into the calm water of the river and be safe. The only lighting aboard was produced by a small generator, and in this remote coastal area of Honduras, there wasn't any electricity so it was pitch black on the open water. Backing the boat in the storm and pitch dark two miles out from the coast wasn't easy, but at last we discerned the headland of the river. If we stuck on the bar, we would be beat to pieces and be washed off into the surf with little chance of

Continued inside...

The front gate broken and all items lost at sea.



The P.E.T. Ministry • Jeff Sukup, Director

1109 E. Osborne Avenue • Tampa, FL 33603 • 813.625.7789 • www.tampapet.com

New Packing Process

In the month of March we started packing the entire front end of the wheel chair completely assembled. This makes the packing process much quicker by eliminating the need to take it apart. In addition parts will not end up missing on the receiving end because of this new step and the unit will also go together that much quicker when reassembled. See photo at right of front unit placed in carriage body in the box.



P.E.T. Photo Spotlight



Stampede of Service, a group of student volunteers from the University of South Florida came to the workshop to assemble and pack the P.E.T. wheelchairs

Prayer Requests

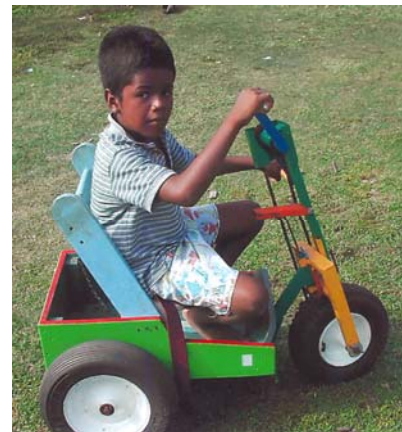
- That the Lord would continue to bless us with the financial means necessary to allow the work to continue through us to bring this gift of hope to the least fortunate of us.
- That the Lord would direct individuals to act as workshop coordinators helping in the overseeing of the production.
- That our volunteers would continue to give their time to produce the six PET wheel chairs a week that we average and that new faces would join our ranks.



Above is a picture of the camera crew that came into the Tampa workshop recently. Seminole Electric Cooperative held an employee work day at the PET this past year and are going to place it into their company's annual report.



The woodworking group in Sun City, FL that provides the ready to use wood parts for assembly.



P.E.T. distribution in Honduras to child with spinal bifida (left) and adult with the bends from lobster diving (above).

Honduras Shipwreck...continued

surviving. We stuck and unstuck several times, but at last successfully crossed it. However, we missed the mouth of the river and grounded a half mile off shore on another sand bar with the surf breaking over us.

After holding onto the rocking boat all night in the dark, a fisherman in a small boat approached at 10AM and asked if we needed assistance. He was unable to tie up alongside due to the surf and we had to jump overboard and climb into his boat. Dr. Foster broke his ankle when he entered the surf. We made an attempt a few days later to salvage the boat, but the engine room had flooded and it was impossible to lift the gate with the minimal equipment we had available.

As a result of this tragedy, we lost our entire cargo, including the 50 P.E.T. wheel chairs that represented \$15,000 and many volunteer man hours. We now have a major set back in our distribution, but we want to take this as an opportunity to do even more for these divers and their families. We hope to send 300 wheel chairs to them within the year, and so funding is desperately needed to make this happen. If you feel led to help with this effort, donations can be sent to the PET Project, P.O. Box 2105, Tampa, FL. 33601. P.E.T. is a 501c3 non-profit organization and all donations are tax deductible.

How you can help

This is a growing but daunting ministry due to the great need. There are many ways to help as the many current volunteers and contributors have learned.

INDIVIDUALS AND LOCAL CHURCHES

- Pray for the 21 million people in the world who have lost the use of their legs through polio, landmines, war amputations, crocodiles, etc.
- Give/Raise Funds: This is always basic. It takes money to buy metal and parts, to weld, to package, to ship, and to distribute. "Ask...and you shall receive" -- is the message of Scripture. Be creative.
- Find People with welding, metalworking, or woodworking skills who can offer to help build PET parts. Help them with expenses--buy the metal, etc. Help them ship it to Tampa PET in Tampa, FL USA.
- Find Businesses that sell or make "off the shelf" items needed for the PETs. Ask them to donate or sell to you at no profit. Send the items to The PET Place.
- Talk about the PET Project to others. Say in conversation, "Our church is doing a fascinating mission project..." Tell the story. Word of mouth is the best advertisement!

DONATIONS

To make a donation, please print out our donation form on the website, or use the one below, and send it along with your donation to: PET FLORIDA, P.O. Box 2105, Tampa, FL 33601.

GIFTS FROM THE HEART

Honor your loved ones while helping to provide another person with mobility. Two gifts in one, a Gift From the Heart celebrates a special occasion, in honor of, or in memory of, while supporting the work of The PET Project. A note will be sent to the person being honored. This gift information can be filled out on our donation form.

ESTATE PLANNING

As you do your estate planning, consider making the PET Project a part of those plans. The need for the GIFT OF MOBILITY is an ongoing need with millions around the world awaiting it.

Volunteer information

The Tampa P.E.T. workshop is open every Saturday from 9AM-3PM and Thursdays 1:30PM-4:30PM. Volunteers are needed to assist with packing (each P.E.T. includes about 30 pounds of clothing, toys, supplies, etc. that serve as the packing material), sorting, painting, assembly, woodworking and metal work. No prior experience is necessary, training is provided, and volunteers of all ages are welcome. There is a particular need for experienced welders. The oldest volunteer is 90 years old and teenagers can fulfill their community service hours as well!

For more information, or to donate good used or new clothing, supplies, toiletries, etc., contact:

Jeff Sukup
webmaster@tampapet.com
813-625-7789

George Frazer
gmilo2@yahoo.com

Workshop Location:

1109 E Osborne Ave, Tampa, FL 33603
East of Nebraska on 12th St and Osborne (just off of I-275 in Tampa at the MLK exit). See map below.

Workshop times:

Saturday 9AM - 3PM
Thursday 1:30PM - 4:30PM
Check the website for holiday hours.

Website:

<http://www.tampapet.com>



PET Project Donation Slip

Your donation to the PET ministry will provide someone with a whole new way of life. Help raise a child or adult from the dirt to dignity with your gift.

The cost of each P.E.T., including materials, assembly and shipment, is \$250.

Gifts of all amounts are accepted and appreciated! All donations are tax-deductible.

Please detach and return the bottom portion with your contribution.

Please accept my gift of \$_____ to the P.E.T. Workshop.

(Make checks payable to "P.E.T. Tampa, Florida" and mail to:

P.O. Box 2105, Tampa, FL 33601)

Name _____

Address _____

Email Address _____