

Kitchen Table Charities Trust

mobilising

the

Children of Malawi

(5 cases: cum 15 -19 of 30 : 2017)

If life for the average, 'healthy' Malawian child is poor then life for those with severe mobility problems can be dire.

The consequences for the child and its family can be many and debilitating.

The Government of Malawi does not provide mobility aids.

Even if they could find them, most families would not be able to afford a mobility aid for their child.

Without a mobility aid the child cannot go to school and will have a very limited social life.

If the child cannot go to school, in most cases this restricts both parents from working therefore impacting the family income needed just to survive.

Without a mobility aid, like a wheelchair, parents and guardians carry the child on their backs. As the child grows the weight causes back problems for the adults....and so the above negative cycle continues.

The prosthetics workshop at the Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital, Blantyre, Malawi has been developed to make wheelchairs each to meet the specific needs of those children fortunate enough to receive charitable funds to meet the cost.

Kitchen Table Charities Trust is a big supporter of this initiative and the following case stories are a result of their generous help.

[Family reactions at end.]



Samson is 5 years old and comes from Soche Township in Blantyre, Malawi. He goes to a nursery school where he is carried to and from by his mother. At school he has a problem maintaining a sitting position for more than 10 minutes hence most of the time he is lying on a mat.

He is a quadriplegic Cerebral Palsy patient due to a prolonged birth. He is incontinent but has had no pressure sores and has sensation. Muscle power is reduced such that he cannot hold a toy in his hands for more than 3 minutes.

He is now fitted with a child's wheelchair with a pressure relieving cushion for good pelvic support and comfort. It also has a lap tray for him to use at school as a desk and at home as a table. His mother was trained in proper ways of putting him on the wheelchair and pushing on a flat surface and a slope.

John is 7 years old and lives in Mbayani Township in Blantyre, Malawi with his parents. His mother has been carrying him to school a Kilometre away but he is gaining weight fast and she is struggling.

He is a Cerebral palsy patient (Diplegia) secondary to birth asphyxia. He is able to control both bowel and bladder. He has muscle power of grade 4 on the upper limbs and 3 on the lower limbs. He has good level of sensation and has had no pressure sores.

John is very active; he is able to crawl 50m. He is able to play with friends almost any games such as football using his hands while seated. A wheelchair means easier mobility to school and more able to associate with his friends and generally to be mobile.

He is now well fitted with a child's wheelchair having a lap tray for him to be well supported and an appropriate pressure relieving cushion for comfort and postural support. His mum was trained on safe ways of pushing him on the slope and uneven terrain.





Yamikani is 7 years old and stays with his parents in Mishoni Village, T/A Nkanda in Mulanje District, Malawi. He has a loving mother who carries him to and from school even though his weight has increased.

He has many friends who come to entertain him at home though sometimes he feels lonely if they have not visited or when they change the place of play and he cannot go.

He has Quadriplegia Spastic Cerebral palsy secondary to jaundice that started when he was two days old. He has limited ability to hold things and use his hands. He is able to control both bowel and bladder and has had no pressure sores and has sensation. He is at risk of developing contractures and must continue attending physiotherapy.

A wheelchair means easier mobility to school, church and other places but also to provide him with good postural support. It relieves his parents from carrying him and frees them for other activities that would help them generate income. His mother was trained on wheelchair caring, effective usage of the wheelchair and how they can prevent pressure sores.

Chikondi is a 7 year old boy from Mussa Village, T/A Machinjiri in Blantyre, Malawi. He goes to school though sometimes he has to stay away due to mobility problems. He is carried to and from school and church but only when his mother is free and able. He likes playing with friends though it is only occasionally since he cannot follow them where they go.

He has Cerebral Palsy (Diplegia) secondary to birth trauma. He also has delayed developmental problems. He is able to use upper limbs though muscle power is reduced. He is able to control both bowel and bladder. He has had no pressure sores and has good level of sensation. He has physiotherapy treatment and his range of motion has improved.

A wheelchair means easier mobility to school, church and other places. He will be able to play more with his friends and will not be carried by his parents any more. He is fitted with an appropriate child's wheelchair with a pressure relieving cushion to prevent him from getting pressure sores as well as for comfort.





Janet is 14 years old and stays at Jali in Zomba District, Malawi with both parents and other siblings. Janet goes to school and is in fourth grade. Until recently her parents carried her to and from school 1 km from their house but stopped when she became too heavy. She is able to crawl and sit independently. She is very active and **will crawl to and from school and church.**

She has many friends that she visits and likes singing and playing games. She is not able to do other activities of daily living such as bathing and dressing by herself.

She has Cerebral Palsy and is paraplegic secondary to birth asphyxia. She is spastic and this limits her range of motion in all joints; she is having contractures on lower limbs. She is epileptic and is on Phenobarbital. She has had no pressure

sores and has good level of sensation though incontinent.

A wheelchair relieves her from crawling and her clothes and body will benefit. She has now been fitted with an appropriate child's wheelchair with a pressure relieving cushion to prevent her from getting pressure sores as well as for comfort. It also has a lap tray for support and will also be using it as a table when eating and writing.

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**The messages to Kitchen Table Charities Trust from all the families are very similar and can be summarised as follows:**

- They were all genuinely overwhelmed to hear that their child would be assessed, fitted and supplied with a wheelchair through the generosity of KTCT.
- None of them imagined that they would ever receive such a precious gift and they certainly would never have been able to afford one and the future looked bleak.
- They all wanted their very grateful thanks to be conveyed to the people who made this possible and at the same time many of them in various ways invoked "God's blessing" on them and offered prayers.

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