

Ismael's story

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01/21/2021

Ismael Rojas

Ismael Rojas is a Salt Lake City resident, student, Mexican immigrant, and volunteer at the Utah Assistive Technology Program lab. About a year and a half ago he received his first wheelchair from the program that allowed him unprecedented independence. Rojas lives alone. His family lives in Mexico and is thus an independent man in his early sixties; he is training in cybersecurity at a local community college.

"The wheelchair changed my life," Ismael said. "A wheelchair is a basic need for those with disabilities and is the minimum for being mobile. With a wheelchair, there aren't so many obstacles and limitations to daily life."

He first received a motorized wheelchair during his cancer treatment.

"I was constantly exhausted, even sitting was difficult and tiring," he said. "This wheelchair opened the door for me to be able to go to the doctor and attend all the different treatments I needed. If I hadn't had one, I wouldn't have been able to do it."

He gained access to his wheelchairs through a referral of a friend, a subsidy, and a device loan provided by the UATP program.

He is now using his third wheelchair provided by the UATP. Ismael said that the benefits of having one extend beyond his treatments. "Wheelchairs offer a variety of experiences," he said. "I can now go grocery shopping, visit friends and go to my classes. Even around the house, it is very comfortable."

Rojas lives alone and is grateful to the UATP for providing such an impactful service. "Don't stop helping people with disabilities," he said. "With all the great work you do, people still need more support, especially with coronavirus. I am thankful; we wouldn't be able to be an independent part of society without UATP."