

Where Resilience, Resourcefulness and Community Partners Intersect

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UATP wheelchair the consumer borrowed while hers was repaired.

When I first met our consumer, she was navigating one of the most challenging periods of her life. Just weeks after undergoing surgery to remove brain tumors, she was still in the early stages of recovery, dealing with the physical and emotional toll of her treatment. Her movements were careful and deliberate, and she tired easily, but that didn't dampen her determination to recover at home with her husband.

After reaching out following a referral from a community partner, she explained that she had been using a wheelchair they kept at their home for their granddaughter, who was also in a slow recovery from a catastrophic car accident.

The consumer went on to tell me about the frustrating maze of insurance approvals she was currently navigating. Despite her doctor's clear recommendation for a wheelchair during her recovery, the insurance company required multiple forms, additional medical evaluations, and what felt like endless waiting periods. Meanwhile, her mobility was limited, and she was struggling with basic daily activities, and her spouse was at an age and physical condition where hands on assistance could prove hazardous for both individuals.

This wasn't just about the practical aspects. There was something deeply moving about seeing this grandmother, still healing from major surgery, using her granddaughter's wheelchair as a bridge between her current limitations and her future mobility. It was a tangible connection between generations, a reminder that sometimes the tools we need for healing can come from unexpected places.

This wheelchair had slipped into a moderate state of disrepair. The footrests were flopping past their stops and every nut and connection on the device was loose and required a touch of maintenance. I offered to breathe some new life into the device and set her up with a Lending Library wheelchair in the interim. After attempting to repair the footrests which were ultimately damaged beyond repair, we ordered new parts.

As the new parts arrived and the maintenance was completed, I made a call to notify them that we had the chair ready. When they visited the lab to pick up the wheelchair, both the consumer and her husband were deeply grateful and a bit emotional about the service we had provided.

This was an excellent illustration of how our outreach efforts come to fruition and create ripples that carry and ensure the confidence of our partners and the value of a community effort. This experience reminded me that healing isn't just about medical treatments and insurance approvals. Sometimes it's about making do with what we have, finding strength in family and community connections, and recognizing that resilience often comes in the most unexpected forms—even in the shape of a well-worn wheelchair that carries not just our bodies, but our determination to keep moving forward.