

Hope on Wheels: How One Chair Kept Independence Rolling



On a cold December morning, just as the year was winding down, a small piece of news quietly arrived at LIFTT that would change someone's life in a very big way. A set of donated, fully functioning power chairs had become available to us. To most people, that might sound like "equipment." To our team, it sounded like possibility: more independence, more safety, more dignity, more freedom of movement.

Almost immediately, one consumer came to mind. We'll call him KD. His power chair was his lifeline. It was how he got out of bed, moved around his home, visited friends, and lived his life. But lately his chair

had been failing slowing down, malfunctioning, threatening to quit altogether. It needed serious work in the shop. The problem was cruelly simple: if his chair went in for repairs, KD would have no way to move. No backup. No second option. No independence.

The choice in front of him felt awful: stay mobile in a chair that might fail at any moment or send it in and risk being stuck in bed, cut off from his daily life.

That's the moment LIFTT's people did what they do best.

KD's PCA facilitators raised the alarm. The Independent Living Program stepped in. The newly opened upLIFTT Thrift Store joined the conversation. Together, the team began to puzzle through the problem: How do we get KD safely into a reliable chair today while his own is in the shop? How do we protect both the consumer and the organization? How do we turn a generous donation into a sustainable solution, not a one-time exception?



Over the next twenty-four hours, staff members traded ideas, reviewed policies, and pulled together their different areas of expertise. Out of that collaboration came something beautifully simple and deeply practical: **LIFTT's Temporary Wheelchair Loan Agreement**, a clear, consumer-centered way to loan a power chair short-term while a primary chair is being repaired, with responsibilities,

documentation, and consent all spelled out.

The first person to benefit from that new process was KD.



When the donated chair was delivered, and he transferred into it for the first time, the change was immediate. He didn't just gain a new set of wheels; he gained relief. He could keep his routine. He could move through his home and community. He could send his old chair to the shop without fear that his life would grind to a halt. What could have been days or weeks of isolation turned into one simple truth: life goes on.

Behind that moment was a whole network of care: the donor who trusted LIFTT with a valuable piece of equipment, the upLIFTT Thrift Store that helped steward the donation, the PCA Program that knows the realities

consumers face every day, the IL team that sees independence as non-negotiable, and the leadership that helped turn a "what if" idea into a policy we can now use again and again.

For KD, it was "just" a loaner chair. For us, it was a promise kept.

This is who LIFTT is when a crisis rolls through the door: a team that will move heaven and earth, rewrite the playbook, and build new tools if that's what it takes to keep someone living freely and joyfully in their own life. One donated power chair became "hope on wheels," and it won't be the last.

Thank you, Holly, Maddie, Pam, Freda, Danial, and Theresa, for everything you do for LIFTT and the people we serve!

LIFTT's Team