News from the Field

One of the many things that make us so thankful that there is a PET project, and that we each can be a vital part of it, are stories like these. This 23 year old Guatemalan woman was born with spina-bifida. With the PET and mini-mart (cooler in the back of her PET) she is now able to sell ice cream and support herself and her child. She was totally dependent on others before she got her new PET.

Although we don’t have a picture, Vadlimer Jibladze, 54, from the Republic of Georgia, had both legs amputated because of endarteritis. He made himself a little board on wheels to be able to move about. When he got his new PET, he immediately climbed on and said, “For the first time in eight years I am able to look people in the face instead of swallowing dust in the street.”

This 19 year old (Noel Antonia from Honduras) had to have both legs amputated to be fit for a prosthesis. However, because of the severity of the amputation and low quality of the prostheses, he found it easier and more comfortable to get around by walking on his hands, or dragging himself along the ground. Needless to say, he already had the necessary upper body strength when he got his PET.

“God has given us the grace of working for Him with men and women of uncommon grace towards this ministry and towards each other. All I can say is “Thank You” with all of the meaning that I can give. “ (Mel West)
Unlike other PET shops around the world, the PET shop in Holland Michigan is unique. It is the only one strictly dedicated to making the smaller, child PETs. These three pictures show why child size PETs are necessary; these girls live in Cote d’Ivoire (Ivory Coast) West Africa, and, PET Holland Michigan’s latest milestone. The shop was started in July 2009 and they just built their 1000th child PET.

They are currently building over 400 per year. One other item of interest is that during the PET International Conference last September, the PET Holland people graciously gave us several rolls of colorful vinyl which we are now using for our rainbow PET seats.

Speaking of different type PETs, you may not know about the Pull-PET. For those who have neither the use of their legs nor upper body strength, several PET shops build a special Pull-PET to meet their needs. The only thing we know about the picture on the right is that it came from Zambia and is titled, “Mr. Kanyenye taking his daughter to church”.

And then there are those who (Mexico in this case) like speed, rather than power, for their PETs (picture on the left). One of the attributes of the PET is that it is adaptable to most local needs and circumstances. These two high-school students copied a PET they saw and modified it for their local street conditions. Fortunately, even though PETs are designed for one speed, on rough roads and trails, their generic design allows them to be significantly modified when needed.

Several months ago Mel West, one of the PET founders, spoke to the local AARP group in Columbia Missouri. He shared his notes with us:

(1) When we in this country retire many of us are at the peak of our potential to be useful in society. We have accumulated a treasure of wisdom, learning, skills, understandings, and experiences. We have a large network of contacts and friends with whom we can work. We usually have 20 or more years of at least reasonably good health ahead of us. We often have accumulated savings, which we can share with those less fortunate if we so choose. And we are free to follow the spirit of our conscience --no boss can tell us what to do or not do. What a treasure of opportunity we hold in our hands!!

(2) People are living longer after retirement. My grandfather died at about 67, and my father at 76. I am 86+.

(3) We have a tsunami of "Baby Boomers" entering retirement. What will they do with the gifts mentioned in (1)? Will their generational attitude of "what's in it for me?" carry on?
(4) Many go to "financial planners" to plan for retirement. Most go to a doctor for similar planning. I contend that AARP, the Church, and other such groups, should establish ways to help people begin to plan for retirement at mid-life.

(5) How can we guide and help people so they can have a successful retirement? I maintain that people do not necessarily fall into a successful retirement by chance.

Our Volunteer Spotlight for this time is shining on a man so experienced, and dedicated to the PET Project, that he has been given the responsibility of overseeing the PET shop for our Tuesday / Wednesday group of volunteers. He does everything in the shop to get as many PETs ready for shipment as possible. Dick Carpenter has commented several times that the Tuesday / Wednesday group is so efficient that he has a hard time keeping up with them on Monday and Thursday.

His wife of 50 years, Bonnie, operates a dog business so needs lots of different types of building done, from fences, to kennels, to cupboards, and houses. He is a “can do” person who can build anything, to fit anywhere, if given only the basics of “where to put it”. He even flies his own airplane and has taken dogs for Bonnie to anyplace they need to go in the Northwest.

Having grown up in Montana, Bob Young was a Boiler Maker for over 20 years, and then a master carpenter building homes. Bob and Bonnie parented four children and now have five grandchildren. We appreciate Bob’s dedication and abilities which help make the Rainbow PET Project so successful.

Three under (or mis-) used items:

① A carpenter’s framing square is probably one of the simplest looking tools in his toolbox; no moving parts, doesn’t have to be plugged in, and doesn’t need anything else to make it functional. To a non-professional, the only thing this tool is good for is to draw a line across a board perpendicular to its edge. However, to the trained professional, it is so much more. As a matter of fact, entire books have been written on the various uses of this valuable tool; everything from laying out complex roof rafters, to staircase stringers, to drawing circles; and these are only the tip of the iceberg. Most people are unaware of the hundreds of uses the simple framing square has.

② When it comes to living, most people are also unaware of a fascinating, educational, and enriching book which, if used every day, will lead to a more satisfying life with all of its twists, turns, and daily “problems”. On the surface it may seem that the Bible has some good Sunday school stories and a few verses here and there that can make us feel good, but once a person begins to study and apply the Bible to daily living, it becomes an intriguing and life changing tool.

③ To the untrained eye, a PET looks like a fun toy or maybe an exercise machine. To those who have either crawled through the dirt and mud all of their life, or have been hidden in an out of sight room for years, getting a PET is not only a useful tool but physically gives them a life changing experience. As one medical doctor said, “I don’t know of anything in medicine that can change a person’s life so quickly.” Won’t you help? Please use the enclosed coupon and envelope.

Contact Information: For comments about this newsletter, or address changes, please send an e-mail to: petnwnewsletter@onemain.com. You can contact Dick Carpenter at (509) 466-3425. Tax deductible donations may be sent to “WCPC PET Project” and mailed to 15123 N Little Spokane River Dr, Spokane WA 99208.

Be sure you have May 4 circled in red on your calendar for the PET Gala. If you aren’t there you are going to miss an evening of fun, fellowship, and (just to stick to the “f” theme) frivolity. Beginning at 6:00 p.m. you will be treated to an elegant atmosphere, sit-down dinner, live music, free child care, and many more fun events. Tickets are $20.00 each with all proceeds going to build more Rainbow PETs.
The real measure of our life is not riches produced or honors won, but by how we treated others and how they remember us.

“Take 5”

Just how much do you know about the PET Project and some of our volunteers?

- Name 5 countries which have received PETs.
- Name 5 “ailments” which have caused people to need PETs.
- Name 5 other communities in the US which also build PETs.
- Name 5 volunteers (PET-Kin) who help with our Project.
- Name 5 of the wooden parts which make up a Rainbow PET.
- Name 5 companies which help support our Project.
- Name 5 steel parts in a Rainbow PET.

Be sure to let us know how you did. If you can name 5 in each category, we’ll recognize you (and give you a prize) at the May 4 Gala.