

Project : Nilesh Kumar

NAME: Nilesh Kumar

DOB: 23.06.1985 - 33 years

Physical Address: Naroro Settlement, Sigatoka

Level of Spinal Injury: T₅ – T₆ : paraplegia

VSIAF first met Nilesh Kumar on a visit to Tamavua Rehabilitation Hospital. We decided to visit Nilesh Kumar to principally assess his home for the purpose of helping him.

Story & Background:

Lives in Nororo, Sigatoka. Left school early as he was not doing well at school and started working at Shop and Save supermarket, Sigatoka. He was a “Row Boy” – young boys who pack/restock shelves, carry heavy loads and stack supplies at their warehouse. A pinched nerve progressed to the point that he began losing feeling on one of his legs from the waist down which gradually moved to the other leg but he kept on working. Eventually he collapsed at work as he could not feel anything anymore and his legs could not support his weight. He has since spent 12 years in bed and has suffered from bed sores necessitating his admittance to Tamavua Rehab every now and then

Lives with his father and older sibling Shanil who is about 34 years old and works for Billmoria in Sigatoka town. His only sister has married and moved out of the family home. His father is 59yrs old. His mother passed away when they were still small. His step-mother left them at the on-set of Nilesh’s sickness leaving him alone in the house. It was left to his father and brother Shanil to take care of him at home between farming and a full-time job in town. Learnt to be independent and take care of himself when his father and brother are occupied.

His Home, Suggestions & Observations:

He lives in their house at their farm. Has a hospital bed as well as a commode that will need a bit of repair as the wheels are not working and needs cleaning up. Accessibility to the house is a VERY major issue. The ambulance/ taxi and any other motor vehicle are limited to parking at the bottom of the drive. Nilesh is carried from his house to the waiting vehicle due to the steep drive. Nilesh can access their home if modifications can be done so he takes care of himself while his father and brother are at work. He has full use of his hands as he is a paraplegic. At the moment he bathes in a corner of the laundry area where he is hosed down by his 59yr old dad as he cannot carry him anymore.

The visit was a total surprise to the Kumar family. No one has ever helped this family since the accident, they have worked and walked alone. Dr. Pratibha Singh – (Doctor-In-Charge) of the

Tamavua Rehabilitation Hospital (TRH), often visits on her rounds around the country. They had donated the commode and Hospital bed to Nilesh. They live on a farming belt, so houses are far from each other unlike the city or town settings where homes are close to each other. There is therefore a great need to help train Nilesh to be independent and take care of himself as his father is aging fast. His older brother has held off marriage due to the enormous daily task of taking care of Nilesh, holding down a job in town and farming alongside their father.

Nilesh's father Mr. Raj Kumar was left totally speechless on Friday. He could not believe that a group of unknown people could form an association and reach out to virtual strangers like himself and his son with the view to help alleviate their burden. This is after he discovered that Viti Spinal Injury Association of Fiji (VSIAF) had done a chance visit to see his son in TRH (2 visits) and would go all the way to Sigatoka to see their house and gauge their needs. His words "I feel so much alive and excited. I feel I have been given a chance and want to live again!" This is after so much pain and the heavy burden of taking care of his farm and paraplegic son. Their lives came to a complete stop after the incident.

My personal observation: Raj was so shocked to hear of the background of VSIAF and the fact that they can lead normal lives like Paul McGoan does. The hope that his son Nilesh can go out of the house and have friends of his own and be independent and perhaps pursue a hobby or two.

Lesson learnt: Hope is such a powerful potent feeling!

Recommendation:

1. Construct Driveway to enable vehicles accessibility to load Nilesh from his porch area at home to various locations & return



Photo is taken from the main road side

2. Need - A new commode on wheels

Project Complete Gallery :











