



the dpw

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Our ``Disability Disclosure Campaign'' success story....

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By Keletso Ratlhagane

MAFIKENG: Monty Lesotho, our Administration Officer, has helped change the mindset that projects people with disabilities as objects of pity, rather than capable individuals who are and can contribute immensely to the development of society.

In spite of the challenges often encountered by people with disabilities, the 36-year-old, wheelchair-bound, succeeded where most able people have failed.

Lesotho has just legally acquired a drivers licence, bought himself a passenger car which has already been customized to modify pedal controls to suite perfect driving and control for him.

``The public transport system- busses and taxis- which we use daily, does not provide for our needs and this poses a serious challenge which has to be addressed and corrected.

``I have always dreamt of driving myself around because the public transport system could not meet my needs,`` he said.

Lesotho, registered with the Johannesburg-based driving school, Abacos, for driving lessons which lasted approximately a week. This culminated in him obtaining a drivers licence after a tests in Mafikeng.

His driving school and including accommodation costs of more than R3 900 were paid for by the department which also assisted Lesotho with a state vehicle to and from Johannesburg.

`` I humbled by the support I enjoyed from the department but above all my achievement demonstrate that I need not be confined to a wheel chair for the rest of my life. Many still cannot believe that a person with disability can achieve this much,`` he said.

In congratulating Lesotho, Public Works MEC Jerry Thibedi said:

``People with disabilities too have rights. That explains why in our new democracy we have legislation that protects and promote the rights of people with disabilities. Our

constitution outlaws discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, sex and disability,” he said.

Director for Human Resource Management at the department, Pogisho Moremedi, the department is committed to the empowerment of People with Disabilities (PwDs).

He said the support the department gave to Lesotho was a contribution to help improve his life and as a colleague he also needs our support in order to perform in his duties,” he said.

Moremedi said the department, as an equal opportunity and affirmative action employer, has committed itself to mitigate the impact of disabilities on employees and to allow them to lead normal lives.

The Disability Disclosure Campaign was conducted in terms of the Technical Assistance Guidelines on disability and disability disclosure forms from the Department of Labour to encourage employees to disclose their disabilities.

Todate 37 employees have disclosed their disabilities a move which would assist the department to embark on appropriate and relevant empowerment programmes pertinent to the empowerment of PwDs.

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