

Rhoda's Story

June 2007 | Words and photos by Leah Missbach Day

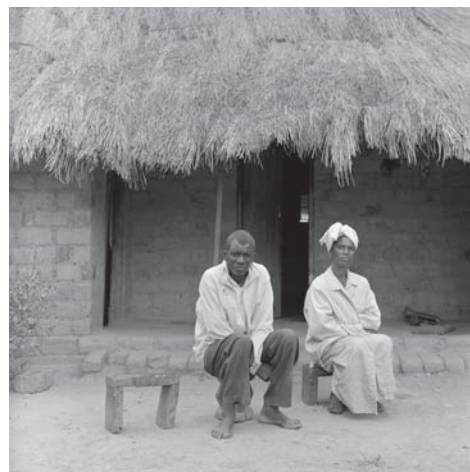


Rhoda Katite is a farmer, a shop owner, Vice Chair-woman of her community, a mother, grandmother and sister. Somehow, she also finds time to be a volunteer caregiver, delivering help to individuals living with HIV/AIDS in and around her community, a rural village 35 kilometers northwest of Lusaka, the capital of Zambia. Felicitous Katite, her sister-in-law, is a volunteer counselor. Together, they care for about 20 patients per week. Rhoda says, "I feel from the heart to take care of patients and young children that are vulnerable. It is just a calling. I feel good because I help my family and friends."

Rhoda received a bicycle from World Bicycle Relief in April 2007. The bicycle has transformed her daily life as well as the lives of many others. Her rural village does not benefit from any public transportation. Before

receiving the bicycle, Rhoda spent most of her day walking. She is now able to get to the fields quicker and transport goods back to her shop more efficiently. She has more time to care for her own family. And she has more time and ability to care for her neighbors in need. She and Felicitous have been able to double their patient load while also increasing their quality of care.

Mr. Chiyokoma is one of their patients. When they learned that Mr. Chiyokoma's health was declining rapidly, Rhoda was able to transport him on her bicycle 2 kilometers to the nearest clinic, where he was tested for AIDS. He was diagnosed positive, and Felicitous was able to reach him quickly with the bicycle to counsel Mr. Chiyokoma and help him understand that HIV is not a death sentence. She patiently taught him that with time and proper medication, he will regain his health and begin farming again soon.



At the time of these photographs, Mr. Chiyokoma had been taking antiretroviral medication for two months. Though his feet hurt due to side effects of the HIV medication, he has shown remarkable improvement. Rhoda monitors his twice-daily medication, meals and also makes sure his home is clean. Meanwhile he is recuperating his strength and re-developing interest in home and family.



How to help: Just \$134 purchases a complete bicycle, spare parts, and support for a volunteer like Rhoda. Any donation amount helps provide the power of bicycles. Instructions for contribution by credit card, check or wire transfer are available on the web at www.worldbicyclerelief.org.