

# A NEW FACE, A NEW BEGINNING



**HE NOW NOSE HOPE:** Isasane Selata is looking forward to being able to face relatives, friends and others in his rural community, from whom he used to hide his appearance for fear they would be shocked by his disfigurement, caused by cancer.

PICTURE:  
TERRY HAYWOOD

## Facing up to a new life with fresh optimism

**LATOYA NEWMAN**

**T**SASANE Selata was resigned to the fact that he would die with a deformed face, ostracised by his community because of how he looks. But now Selata, who lost most of his face to cancer five years ago, has renewed hope. "I had lost hope because I did not have money (for medical assistance). So I just left it until I die ... but now I am very happy and I have regained my

confidence," he said yesterday. Through the combined efforts of Lesotho Flying Doctors, Partners in Health, Operation Smile South Africa and the Durban University of Technology's (DUT) dental sciences department, Selata is undergoing specialist reconstructive treatment.

Selata, 31, has no nose, his eyes are damaged, and he has a slight hole and scarring on his forehead and towards the centre of his face.

He lives with his two sisters in rural Phamong, and first discovered a cancerous growth in 2000. After an operation in 2004, he began to lose parts of his face.

"The community did not take it well. I felt bad because they are scared of me, so I started bandaging my face (to hide the damage).

"The first operation cost me a lot of money, so I am very relieved to get this help. "My sisters will be very

pleased to see a different person," he said.

DUT dental technician Peter Furber will manufacture a maxillofacial prosthesis for Selata this week.

"I have already sculpted his nose, and probably from Monday we will start mixing colour to suit the patient's skin," said Furber, who has made a public appeal.

"There is only so much that we can do. I have provided the prostheses, and DUT has pro-

vided Mr Selata's meals and accommodation. But he has come all the way out here and it must be like a concrete jungle for him," Furber said.

"We are appealing, in the spirit of Mandela Day on Saturday, for a seSotho-speaking family in Durban to host Mr Selata for the weekend, to help him feel more at home," he added.

Anyone wanting to arrange a family stay for Selata can contact DUT's Bhekani Dlamini on 031 373 2845 or 083 299 7972.



**NEW NOSE:** Isasane Selata's face will be reconstructed at DUT Dental and Science Department by DR Peter Furber. PICTURE: BONGANI MBATHA