

Hoist system a boost for quality of life

► Sue Russell

Asked what he's most proud of, about the technologies Christchurch-based HT Systems has created to assist those unable to stand, CEO Richard Shepherd says it's the fact that they are making a huge difference to the quality of life for their clients.

"We've created a hoist system that one person can use to enable a person in a wheelchair to transfer to another seat. It's given our clients more dignity, self-worth and empowerment because they are not having to wait for two people to lift them.

"When a person must continually wait, it takes away their dignity. It also means, clients who may have had to go into a rest-home situation, can stay in their own home and be supported by their family."

The revolutionary Kera sit2sit hoist machine is the result of decades of research and development by Professor Emeritus Keith Alexander, from the school of engineering at the University of Canterbury, who also invented the Springfree trampoline.

Keith wanted to find a way to assist people immobilised in wheelchairs to more easily, quickly and safely move from one seated position to another.

What he created has made the world of difference for both the client and the caregiver, making it easy and quick to relocate in minimal time.

Tracking back the history of Kera sit2sit's development is fascinating.

Back in the 1990's Burwood Hospital came to the engineering faculty concerned at injuries nurses and health-assistants were



The Kera sit2sit hoist machine is the result of decades of research and development by Professor Emeritus Keith Alexander, from the school of engineering at the University of Canterbury.

experiencing when lifting spinal patients. Keith seized this request and treated it as an 'academic project' for students in the faculty to engage in.

Out of this research over many years a number of concepts were created. Fine-tuning upon fine-tuning took place to ensure the equipment was safe, easy to use, durable.

Enabling the technology to come to market was an investor group who put in funding in 2018. Further financial support came from Government Agency, Callaghan Innovation.

During the product development phase, Richard says, the emphasis shifted somewhat from the caregiver experience to the client experience, an important balance.

Fine-tuning upon fine-tuning took place to ensure the equipment was safe, easy to use, and durable.

"We have spent a lot of time in people's homes and workplaces, collaborating with users and therapists to understand their needs and ensure that we developed the Kera sit2sit to make a real difference in their lives.

"Even right down to the casters which make it possible for the client to be moved across carpet in their home. ."

"What's been developed is really unique in the market. The Kera sit2sit can transfer a person with no strength at all, we have even transferred people with no legs, and quadraplegics. Feedback we've had from users and health professionals alike has been extremely positive."

Richard and the team at HT Systems, are continually talking to their clients and fielding requests to make their lives better.

In answer to these requests, they are now developing equipment to help people stand and devices that can be taken with clients when they go on holiday.

"It's given our clients more dignity, self-worth and empowerment because they are not having to wait for two people to lift them."

And the technology doesn't end there. HT Systems has also sourced a car transfer system, enabling people to move from wheelchair into the passenger seat of a car.

After organically growing Kera sit2sit sales in New Zealand, HT Systems utilised crowd-funding group 'Pledge Me' to raise funds for the development of new products and the launch of the Kera sit2sit in Australia in 2022.

Richard says this has enabled people directly or indirectly impacted by mobility issues to invest and for a wider audience of people who can see the merit and life-changing potential of HT System's technologies.

"We'll be going to market again later this year, seeking further funding, to enable us to reach more markets and continue developing these really important aids."

Digital
Marketing
Partners

TECH | B2B

cuspdigital.co.nz

cusp.
DIGITAL

Tuki

Design that
moves with you.

Tuki are proud to
support HT systems.

+64 3 323 6478

info@tukidesign.co.nz

1 Chinook Place,
Hornby, Christchurch

@tukidesign.nz

tukidesign.nz

