



Dental technician Peter Furber, of the Durban University of Technology, works on a new nose for Lesotho man Tsasane Selata, right, who lost parts of his face to cancer five years ago. Lesotho Flying Doctors, Partners in Health and Operation Smile South Africa have teamed up with the DUT to make Selata's treatment possible.

PICTURES: BONGANI MBATHA

New hope for man scarred by cancer

LATOYA NEWMAN

AFTER losing most of his face to cancer five years ago, Tsasane Selata had accepted that he would die with a deformed face and ostracised by his community. But now he has cause for hope.

The 31-year-old is to undergo specialist treatment to reconstruct his missing facial parts, thanks to the combined efforts of the Lesotho Flying Doctors, Partners in Health, Operation Smile South Africa and the Durban University of Technology's dental sciences department.

"I had lost hope because I did not have money," said Selata. "So I just left it until I die ... but now I am very happy and I have regained my confidence."

The Lesotho man has no nose, his eyes are damaged and he has a hole and scarring on his forehead.

Selata, who lives with his two sisters in the rural area of Phamong, said he had first discovered his cancerous growth in 2000, and that after an operation in 2004 he had begun to lose parts of his face.

"The community did not take it well," he said. "I felt bad

because they are scared of me, so I started bandaging my face.

"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."

DUT dental technician Peter Furber will be manufacturing a facial prosthesis for Selata this week. A prosthesis is a device designed to replace a missing body part or to make a body part aesthetically pleasing.

Furber said he had been at work on moulds for Selata for the past two days.

"I have already sculpted his nose," he said. "And from Mon-

day we will start mixing colour to suit the patient's skin."

Furber has, however, made a public appeal. "There is only so much we can do," he said. "I have provided the prosthesis. DUT has provided Mr Selata's meals and accommodation. 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, just to help him feel more at home," he said.

Anyone wanting to arrange a family stay for Selata can telephone Bhekani Dlamini, of the DUT, at 031 373 2845 or 083 299 7972.

