

Cheseto kept running through high school, where he grew tall and his stride grew long. Every year, he ran in the district competition, and every year he finished third. He traveled with his school team to races, and for the first time he saw the bright lights of Nairobi, the shores of Lake Victoria, the vast blue of the Indian Ocean.

With each trip, Cheseto's horizon stretched a little farther from the hilltops of Ptop.

Travelling around Kenya - and getting free bread and milk! - made him realize what being a runner could mean.



The story of Cheseto's struggle to run again eventually reached Brooke Raasch, husband of celebrity amputee triathlete and Ironman Sarah Reinertsen. Raasch works at Ossur, a prosthesis company that made Reinertsen's blades and he contacted Cheseto about testing a new product - the Vari-Flex XCs, a small, C-shaped curve with enough flex to serve as a hybrid walking/jogging foot. Raasch encouraged Cheseto to also apply for a grant from the Challenged Athletes Foundation. If approved, Cheseto would receive a pair of Flex-Run blades--prostheses designed specifically for distance running.

Cheseto readily agreed to be a tester, and sent in his application for the blades.

The hybrid XCs arrived before Christmas of 2012. After a fitting with a prosthetist, Cheseto hopped around the room, ecstatic. It felt like he was on a trampoline. "When I got those, I thought they were so springy," he says. "They were wonderful!"



POSTSCRIPT: Since the Twilight 6-K, Cheseto has raced three more times -- a four-miler, a 10-K, and a triathlon for challenged athletes that included a 10-mile run.

To date, the Paralympics does not offer distance events, so he hopes to qualify for the 2016 games in the 400 meters.

