

Thank you for Saving our lives!

Sai Prema Foundation Fiji

GIFT OF LIFE

THANK YOU
FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

You have helped
save the lives of
26 children.

The children, parents and their families are extremely grateful for the free
"Gift of life"
Heart surgeries.























This Gift of Life heart surgeries is a project of Sai Prema Foundation Fiji (*an NGO and Charitable Foundation formed to serve the underprivilged and needy people of Fiji through Medicare, Educare & Sociocare initiatives*).

The Sai Prema Foundation Fiji undertook this initiative in association with the Fiji Ministry of Health and Medical Services in collaboration with an international team of surgeons, doctors and medical professionals from India, Australia, USA & Oman representing the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospitals in India.



26

children underwent open heart surgeries, catheterization lab procedures and other interventions, saving their families in excess of **FJD$2.5million.**

Without intervention and treatment, these children may not have survived.

































77 children
were screened completely free of cost for congenital heart disease at CWM Hospital Suva.









THE TRUE SAVIOURS

Fiji was blessed to have an International team of Surgeons, Doctors and Medical Professionals from India, Australia, USA & Oman representing the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital India to give a new "Gift of Life" to the children and their families.

The local team of Doctors who were the pillar of strength and support for the international team include **Dr. Krupali Tappoo** (*General Practioner and Director of Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Medical Centre, Suva*), **Dr. Ilisapeci Vereti** (*Head of Department of Pediatrics, CWM Hospital, Suva*) & **Dr. Maryanne Kora'ai** (*Pediatric Registrar, CWM Hospital, Suva*).

Dr. Ashish Katewa
INDIA
Chief Pediatric Cardiothoracic Surgeon and Director of Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital, Raipur

Dr. Shaun Setty
USA
Internationally renowned award-winning Pediatric and Adult Cardiothoracic Surgeon and Medical Director of both Long Beach Medical Centre and Miller Children's & Women's Hospital Long Beach, California, USA

Dr. Benjamin Anderson
AUSTRALIA
Pediatric Cardiologist and Interventionist at the Lady Cilento Hospital, Brisbane, Australia

Dr. Ranganathan Ananthasubramaniam
OMAN
Anesthetist, Intensivist, Senior Specialist and Assistant Head of Department of Cardiac Anaesthesia at the Royal Hospital in Muscat, Oman

Dr. Balswaroop Sahu
INDIA
Anaesthetist/Intensivist at the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital, Raipur, India

Dr. Lenore Van Der Merwe
AUSTRALIA
Cardiac Anesthetist at the Prince Charles Hospital, Queensland, Australia

Ms. Kym Stuart
AUSTRALIA
Cardiac Theatre Nurse and Surgical Assistant at the Lady Cilento Hospital in Queensland, Australia and recipient of Order of Australia Medal

Ms. Pooja Gupta
INDIA
Perfusionist at the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital, Raipur, India

Mr. Ajo Raju
INDIA
Surgical Assistant at the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital, Raipur, India

Mr. Satyendra Verma
INDIA
Surgical Assistant at the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital, Raipur, India

Mr. Rizwan Husain
INDIA
ICU Physician Assistant at the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital, Raipur, India

Mr. Rajveer Choudhury
INDIA
ICU Physician Assistant, Delhi, India

Ms. Soniya Scott
AUSTRALIA
Cath Lab Nurse, Brisbane, Australia

Ms. Rajani Dansena
INDIA
ICU Physician Assistantat the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital, Raipur, India

Mr. Jason Chmel
USA
Pediatric Perfusionist at the Rady's Children's Hospital, San Diego, United States

Ms. Deborah Pegg
AUSTRALIA
Clinical nurse educator, pediatric Intensive Care, Lady Cilento Children's Hospital, Brisbane, Australia















Recipients of the Gift of Life free heart surgeries

1. **Age:** 5 days old
Gender: Female
Procedure received: Balloon Septostomy

2. **Age:** 2 months old
Gender: Male
Procedure received: Patent Ductus Arteriousus (PDA) Ligation

3. **Age:** 5 months old
Gender: Male
Procedure received: Ventricular Septal Defect (VSD) Repair

4. **Age:** 10 months old
Gender: Male
Procedure received: Tetralogy of Fallot (TOF) Repair

5. **Age:** 11 months old
Gender: Male
Procedure received: Tetralogy of Fallot (TOF) Repair

6. **Age:** 11 months old
Gender: Female
Procedure received: Patent Ductus Arteriousus (PDA) Ligation

7. **Age:** 1 year old
Gender: Female
Procedure received: Patent Ductus Arteriousus (PDA) Ligation

8. **Age:** 13 months old
Gender: Male
Procedure received: Atrial Septal Defext (ASD) Repair

9. **Age:** 14 months old
Gender: Female
Procedure received: Coarctation of the Aorta (COA) Repair

10. **Age:** 14 months old
Gender: Female
Procedure received: Patent Ductus Arteriousus (PDA) Ligation

11. **Age:** 2 years old
Gender: Female
Procedure received: Patent Ductus Arteriousus (PDA) Ligation

12. **Age:** 2 years old
Gender: Female
Procedure received: Ventricular Septal Defect (VSD) Repair

13. Age: 2 years old
Gender : Female
Procedure received: Patent Ductus Arteriousus Ligation

14. **Age:** 3 years old
Gender: Male
Procedure received: Attempted PDA Ligation (Cath Lab)

15. **Age:** 3 years 3 months old
Gender: Male
Procedure received: Attempted PDA Ligation (Cath Lab) & Ventricular Septal Defect (VSD) Repair

16. **Age:** 6 years old
Gender: Female
Procedure received: Total Anomalous Pulmonary Venous Return (TAPVR) Repair

17. **Age:** 6 years old
Gender: Male
Procedure received: Atrial Septal Defext (ASD) Repair

18. **Age:** 6 years old
Gender: Male
Procedure received: Atrial Septal Defext (ASD) Closure

19. **Age:** 6 years 2 months old
Gender: Male
Procedure received: Pulmonary Stenosis Dilation (Cath Lab)

20. **Age:** 8 years old
Gender: Female
Procedure received: Attempted Patent Ductus Arteriousus Ligation (Cath Lab)

21. **Age:** 9 years old
Gender: Female
Procedure received: Attempted Patent Ductus Arteriousus Ligation (Cath Lab)

22. **Age:** 9 years 2 months old
Gender: Male
Procedure received: Ventricular Septal Defect (VSD) Repair

23. **Age:** 11 years old
Gender: Female
Procedure received: Tetralogy of Fallot (TOF) Repair

24. **Age:** 11 years old
Gender: Female
Procedure received: Atrial Septal Defext (ASD) Repair

25. **Age:** 11 years old
Gender: Female
Procedure received: Atrial Septal Defext (ASD) Repair

26. **Age:** 12 years old
Gender: Male
Procedure received: Ebsteins Anomaly & Atrial Septal Defext (ASD) Repair

Project Summary

Sai Prema Foundation Fiji under its Gift of Life Program in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Medical Services and the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospitals in India facilitated free Pediatric Congenital heart Disease Surgeries for the children of Fiji from the 12th to the 20th of April 2018.

This was the second time that Sai Prema Foundation has facilitated free heart surgeries for the children of Fiji with the previous visit being in August 2016 where 23 successful surgeries were conducted.

This year a 16 member international team conducted the children's heart screening and surgeries led by Dr. Ashish Katewa, a Pediatric Cardiothoracic surgeon from Sanjeevani Hospital in Raipur India. Seven other team members came from India. This included Dr. Balaswaroopa Sahu who is an anesthetist and intensivist, Ms. Pooja Gupta who is a perfusionist, Mr. Ajo Raju a surgical assistant, Mr. Satyandra Kumar Verma who is a surgical assistant, Mr. Rizwan Husain who is an ICU assistant, Ms. Rajani Dansena who is an ICU assistant and Mr. Rajveer Choudhary who is a physician assistant. Five team members were from Brisbane Australia. This included Dr. Ben Anderson who is a pediatric interventional cardiologist, Dr. Lenora Van Der Merwe who is an anesthetist, Ms. Kym Stuart who is a Surgical Assistant, Ms. Deborah Pegg who is an ICU nurse and Ms. Sonya Scott who is a catheter lab nurse. Two team members were from California United states. This included Dr. Shaun Setty who is an adult and pediatric cardiothoracic surgeon and Mr. Jason Chmel who is a perfusionist. One doctor came from Muscat Oman- Dr. Ranganathan who is an anesthetist and intensivist.

A total of 77 children were screened by the Pediatric Cardiologist Dr. Ben Anderson on the 12th and 13th of April. A total of 21 open-heart surgeries were conducted in the operating theater by the surgeons Dr. Ashish Katewa and Dr. Shaun Setty from Friday 13th April to Friday 20th April.

For the first time in Fiji and in the South Pacific, cardiac catheter interventional procedures were done in the Catheter lab at the CWM hospital by Dr. Ben Anderson. A total of 4 procedures were done in the catheter lab and 1 further procedure- an atrial septostomy was performed on a baby in the Neonatal intensive care unit. Hence, a total of 26 successful procedures were performed by the team.

The Sai Prema Foundation bore the cost of the airfares for the team, their accommodation and meals. The Ministry of Health and Medical Services bore the cost of medications and consumables. In addition, all the surgeries and procedures were conducted at the Colonial War Memorial Hospital together with the assistance of the local doctors, nurses and support personnel.

The Minister for Health Honorable Rosy Akbar and her team provided their full support and at the conclusion of the surgeries hosted a gratitude dinner for the team.

Newspaper articles

FIJI SUN | FRIDAY, APRIL 13, 2018 | FIJISUN.COM.FJ

6 | NATION

HOPE FOR KIDS

8 Children With Heart Ailments To Undergo Operation



Head surgeon Dr Ashish Katewa



Dr Benjamin Anderson, left, checks one of the 20 congenital heart patients at CWM Hospital today. Dr Anderson is part of the 10-member specialist medical team that will be conducting free surgeries from tomorrow.

Eight children with congenital heart anomalies have been identified for surgery after the initial screenings by a special team of overseas doctors yesterday.

"The youngest is about two years old and the oldest is 16," said the team's head surgeon, Dr Ashish Katewa.

He said these children were survivors because the critical cases with congenital heart defects usually do not live past one year of age.

"These children we're seeing now (at the screenings) are really survivors," he said.

He said there are likely more survivors with congenital heart disease but the challenge was to ensure the early diagnosis of the condition. He said families with children who display symptoms of blue discoloration of nails, poor weight gain and regular respiratory infection should come for screening.

"Babies who display a such rosebuds cycle should also be screened," he explained.

The such-rosebuds cycle is when a baby can only cuddle on their mother's breast for a short period of about two minutes, and need a longer rest time before they can continue to suckle. Babies normally can suckle for longer than 10 minutes before requiring rest.

More children are expected to be operated on as screenings continue on Friday and Saturday at the Suva's Colonial War Memorial Hospital.

Families are encouraged to take their children to CWMH for screening should they suspect their child suffers from a congenital heart disease.

Surgeries will begin tomorrow as screening continues, said Dr Katewa. Dr Katewa and his 14-member team arrived in the country on Wednesday night, one day later than scheduled after their flight was grounded because of Tropical Cyclone Keni.

The team's visit is organised by the Sai Prema Foundation (Fiji), a non-government organisation organised to serve the poor through a three-pronged mission, one of which is to provide needy and support toward health care.

Dr Katewa thanked the Foundation for its efforts and the Health Ministry for its support.

The charity heart surgeries are organised as part of the foundation's Gift of Life initiative.

The Gift of Life programme is assisted by the Sri Sathya Sai Seniseveni Hospital, where Dr Katewa is a resident surgeon, and the Health Ministry.

When Dr Katewa last visited in 2016, with a team of 10 specialists, they were able to successfully operate on 22 patients.

Source: Sai Prema Foundation (Fiji)

SAI PREMA FOUNDATION (FIJI)

The Sai Prema Foundation (Fiji), founded in 2005, aims to improve the lives of the poor and underprivileged people of Fiji through its Medicare, Educare and Sustainable initiatives. As part of its health initiatives, it organises a monthly mobile medical clinics to hard-to-reach communities, regular blood drives, and the Gift of Life initiative. The Gift of Life initiative is three-pronged in that it coordinates and supports the specialist congenital heart surgery team, encourages the training of local medical staff, and supports a medical scholarship programme to help upgrade and sustain local medical expertise in this specialised field. Visit the Foundation's website http://saipremafiji.com/ or email saipremafiji@gmail.com for more information.

Gift of life for kids

Medics perform surgeries

By NICOLETTE CHAMBERS

A TOTAL of nine surgeries have been completed at CWM Hospital by the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital medical team from Raipur, India since Sunday.

Head surgeon Dr Asish Katewa said since the team's arrival into the country last week, they aimed to ensure that three surgeries were done every day.

Dr Katewa said about 80 Fijian children were screened, however 35 were short-listed for surgeries.

"This is our third trip to Fiji and we offer the service free of charge because there is no other way that these families can afford the surgeries," Dr Katewa said. "These children need treatment so it needs to be fixed."

He added similar problems in Fiji were faced by individuals in India.

"Many of our families are extremely poor and the source of income is not even that much," he added.

He said the youngest patient that was so far operated on was a two-month- old baby weighing 2.9kg.

He is urging future medical specialists to improve the medical system in the country.

"Don't leave Fiji for greener pastures," he said.

"Try to make Fiji as good as Australia and New Zealand to help those who cannot afford to have treatment overseas."

Meanwhile, Sai Prema Foundation director Sumeet Tappoo said they were honoured to be doing this project to help the needy and poor children.

"The foundation is formed to serve the needy and poor children of Fiji and that our philosophy is whatever service we provide is completely free of cost," he said.

"These families are saving about $100,000 and it is amazing that these nurses and doctors can come to Fiji."

The team will depart the country this Saturday.

NATIONAL FEATURE

An act to save lives

> This is a huge undertaking for our foundation and it is heartening ... that there are organisations and individuals ... who support such projects



Members of the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital medical team at the CWM Hospital in Suva last week. Picture: JONACANI LALAKOBAU

EIGHT children born with defects in their hearts have undergone life-saving surgery within the past three days as part of the 'Gift of Life' initiative.

More children will be receiving the "Gift of Life" surgeries over the next few days, thanks to the international team of congenital heart specialists who arrived in the country late last week.

The team, led by leading pediatric heart surgeon Dr Ashish Katewa, is in Fiji as part of the Gift of Life initiative organised by the Sai Prema Foundation.

This is the second time the foundation has co-ordinated and facilitated the free congenital heart surgeries, in conjunction with the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital. The first was in 2016 when 22 children successfully underwent heart surgery.

The team aims to help at least 20 children who need open-heart surgery, an option that normally requires families to spend more than $100,000 because there are no local surgeons and clinicians to be able to provide the service in Fiji.

Last week the Foundation received $20,000 from the ATH Foundation for the Gift of Life initiative.

"I am overjoyed by the support given by the Vodafone ATH Foundation along with other organisations and individuals towards our Gift of Life Heart Surgeries project," said foundation director Sumeet Tappoo.

"This is a huge undertaking for our foundation and it is heartening to know that there are organisations and individuals in society who support such projects."

Vodafone ATH Foundation executive Ambalika Hatty said the Gift of Life initiative was a wonderful cause deserving of support.

"We salute all the volunteer doctors and professionals for donating their knowledge, skill, passion, effort and time towards this worthy cause," she said. "We wish the team every best in screening and successful surgeries."

She said to date, the Vodafone ATH Foundation had directed about $1.3 million towards heart surgeries for children since 2008.

"This was done to help the parents and families who could not afford to save their children's lives," she said. "It has forever been heart breaking to see these surgeries being successful."

Mr Tappoo said the Gift of Life initiative was more than the saving of money for Fijian families.

"It saves the lives of these children and gives them an abundance of happiness and joy to the helpless parents; many of whom have faced many days, months and sometimes years of sleepless nights," he said. ■ SUPPLIED





Dr Ben Anderson checks baby Ahil Chand's heart at the cardio echo room at Colonial War Memorial Hospital on Friday. Picture: SUPPLIED

HEART OPERATION

Mother Tells of Agony While Waiting

When her son went into the operating theatre last Saturday all she did was cry. She prayed that when he came out of the theatre, she wanted a smile on her son's face.

SHIRIKA SHALINI
SUVA

It is not easy for a mother to see her child in much discomfort after a four-hour heart operation.

The best she could do for her son, Darsh Prasad, was to be by his bedside, hold his hand and reassure him that the worst is over.

The wait and the fear of the unknown were part of a three-year wait. That was when she first heard about doctors who would be in Fiji to operate on toddlers like her son.

Preetika Gautam, of Bau Road, Nausori, Darsh's mum said: "My son was only six days old when the doctor said there was a hole in his heart.

"We have been waiting for this day for three years and two months. Just to get my son's heart operation done successfully.

"When my son went into the operating theatre I was crying and praying that I want a smile on my son's face after his operation.

"I came for my son's clinic which is done every six months. I came to know that there were doctors from India for heart surgeries on children.

"We were waiting for a long time. He was first scanned. I was told that he needed the surgery immediately. He was admitted on Friday last week for his surgery to be done on Saturday."

The surgery was declared successful by the doctors.

The youngest baby to be operated on is two-month old Ephraim Sunia Kane.

His mother, Ilivani Ganilau, 29, said it was really hard for her to see her small baby being operated on.

"I am happy that I made the right decision for him to be treated by the team of doctors who came from India," Ms Ganilau said.

"I thank the Sai Prema Foundation which organised the visit by the doctors who provided the free surgery for our children."

Both the parents urged members of the public to take their children to the CWM Hospital for screening should they suspect their child is suffering from congenital heart disease.

Edited by George Kulamaiwasa

Feedback: shirika.shalini@fijisun.com.fj



Preetika Gautam with her three-year-old son, Darsh Prasad, after his heart surgery at the Colonial War Memorial Hospital in Suva on April 15, 2018. *Photo:* Shirika Singh



Ilivani Ganilau with her two-month-old baby after his heart surgery at the Colonial War Memorial Hospital in Suva on April 15, 2018. *Photo:* Shirika Singh



A Ben Anderson Pediatric Cardiologist together with Sai Prema Foundation checks on eight-year-old Berata Delaiwasagi as her mother, Sai Tabua, looks on at Colonial War Memorial Hospital on April 13, 2018. *Photo:* Ronald Kumar

Four patients recover well after heart surgeries

A six-year-old girl can now look forward to running and playing freely because the defect in her heart that caused her to be easily out of breath has been eliminated through open-heart surgery.

Shaniya Dutt, of Nausori, is now recovering with three other children who were successfully operated on by the international medical team at the Colonial War Memorial Hospital.

Shaniya's mother, Priya Dutt, said she could not thank the amazing team of doctors and nurses, enough, who operated on her daughter, and the Sai Prema Foundation for organising the free heart surgeries.

"I thank God for the amazing doctors and nurses who operated on her, and the Sai Prema people for bringing them," said Ms Dutt.

The Sai Prema Foundation, with assistance from its supporters and the Ministry of Health, organises the medical team's visit as part its Gift of Life initiative.

Ms Dutt, a divorcee and mother of two, said it is a huge relief, emotionally and financially, to her and her family that Shaniya's condition has been cured.

She said that Shaniya's heart condition meant she was often sick and could not engage in normal activities.

"I am just so happy now that she can live a normal life," said Ms Dutt.

"Shaniya can now go back to school and play normally with her friends."

The international team comprises 15 medical specialists and is led by Dr Asish Katewa, who is a head surgeon at the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital of Raipur, India.

"All the surgeries have been smooth so far," said Dr Katewa, earlier today.

He explained that Shaniya's surgery required four hours in theatre – about an hour more than usual - because of its complexity.

Shaniya's structural heart defect was an abnormal connection of the blood channels in her heart. This caused her oxygenated blood to mix with her deoxygenated blood.

"We disconnected the abnormal connection and connected the red (oxygenated) blood to the left side of the heart as nature intended," said Dr Katewa.

"Her heart defect is a life-threatening condition that is generally presented immediately after birth," he explained.

He added that there are many children living with this defect but it has yet to be detected. Open heart surgery is the only treatment for such a condition.

Sai Prema Foundation director Sumeet Tappoo said the foundation was on hand at all times to ensure the international medical team received whatever support they need.

He said it was a humbling experience for the foundation to be able to help the children and families who otherwise would not be able to afford the surgical procedures.

"The foundation is really humbled to have the opportunity to make a difference to the lives of these children," said Mr Tappoo. "Local health authorities estimate that about 200 children are born every year in Fiji with congenital heart disease," said Mr Tappoo.

"Fiji does not yet have the specialised surgeons to conduct these surgeries, nor the complementary clinical staff with the specialist support skills."

As such, he said Fiji was fortunate to have access to a world-class team that was offering its services for free.

"It's a fantastic opportunity for families who cannot afford the treatment for their child to access this team's services, which are not only free but of the highest standards," said Mr Tappoo.

The team hopes to be able to treat 25 children with congenital heart defects before they return to their countries.

Sai Prema Foundation

HEALTH ASSISTANCE

Foundation set up to help the children of Fiji

SHIRIKA SHALINI
SUVA

The Sai Prema Foundation was formed to serve under-privileged people of Fiji, said its director Sumeet Tappoo.

Highlighting its aim in medicare, The Gift of Life, Mr Tappoo said: "This project is about providing free heart surgery to the children of Fiji.

"Local health authorities estimate that about 200 children are born every year in Fiji with congenital heart disease.



Sai Prema Foundation director Sumeet Tappoo on April 13, 2018. *Photo:* Ronald Kumar

"It becomes very sad when lots of children lose their lives when they do not receive the right treatment.

"The sheer unaffordability makes it impossible for the families to give the right treatment."

He said there were not enough facilities in Fiji to ensure that children get the right treatment for heart diseases.

The only option for parents is to wait for visiting teams of doctors who visit Fiji for free treatment.

Those parents with money can afford to take their children for overseas treatment, he said.

Mr Tappoo said it cost $100,000 for a child to get treated for congenital heart diseases abroad.

He said he wanted many children as possible in Fiji to be screened to find out if they have congenital heart disease.

Edited by George Kulamaiwasa

Feedback: shirika.shalini@fijisun.com.fj

CARDIAC SURGERY

Infant Marks 1st Birthday With Minister

ASHNA KUMAR
SUVA

It has been a busy few days for Aqela Cirimaitoga.

The infant underwent successful cardiac surgery at Suva's Colonial War Memorial Hospital last weekend after travelling from her home in Labasa, thanks to the Sai Prema Foundation.

The icing on the cake after the successful operation was being able to celebrate her 1st birthday at CWM Hospital with her mother and members of the foundation as well as Minister for Health and Medical Services Rosy Akbar.

The celebration shocked Aqela's mother, Salote Vitiana, because she did believe her daughter's first birthday would be celebrated at the hospital.

Aqela had been admitted at the Colonial War Memorial Hospital since last Wednesday to undergo cardiac (heart) surgery.

Aqela and her mother are originally from Cawaira in Labasa and travelled to Suva with the help of the Sai Prema Foundation to undergo surgery.

The youngest in a family of five children had a smile while cutting her cake on Monday night in the hospital as Ms Akbar held her in her arms.

Ms Vitiana said Aqela was only four months old when the family came to learn of her heart condition.

"It was a heart-breaking moment for the family to see the youngest in so much pain," Ms Vitiana said.

"We then found out about the Sai Prema Foundation and our doctor assisted us to get in touch with them.

"Today my daughter is blessed to have successfully undergone the surgery and is now recovering so well," Ms Vitiana said.

She said she had not expected her daughter to be such a brave girl at her age and to be able to smile after surgery.

"When I saw her after her surgery, I broke into tears," Ms Vitiana said.

"I did not imagine that Aqela will wake up with smiles on her face without feeling any pain."

The international team conducting the surgeries comprised 15 medical specialists and is led by Dr Asish Katewa, who is a head surgeon at the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital of Raipur, India.

The team said earlier that it hoped to be able to treat 25 children with congenital heart defects before leaving Fiji.

Edited by Epineri Vula

Feedback: ashna.kumar@fijisun.com.fj



General Practitioner and Medical Co-ordinator for Sai Prema Foundation, Dr Krupali Tappoo (left), Minister for Health and Medical Services Rosy Akbar holding baby Aqela Cirimaitoga, 1, and Aqela's mother Salote Vitiana. Photos: Ministry of Health and Medical Services



Minister for Health and Medical Services Rosy Akbar with members of the international team that conducted the surgeries. Photos: Ministry of Health and Medical Services

HEART CASES

Foundation 'has worked miracles'

ASHNA KUMAR
SUVA

The miracles the Sai Prema Foundation has performed for families in Fiji, whose members suffered cardiac problems, are just amazing, says Minister for Health and Medical Services Rosy Akbar.

Ms Akbar made the comment while she visited the patients assisted by the Sai Prema Foundation, who underwent cardiac surgeries in the past week at the Colonial War Memorial Hospital in Suva on Monday.

The Sai Prema Foundation is a non-government organisation inspired to serve the poor through a three-pronged mission, one of which is to provide meaningful support toward health care in Fiji.

Ms Akbar said the Fijian Government commended the work that the Sai Prema Foundation had been doing for the children who had heart conditions.

"We thank the whole team for their hard work and their generosity to make a difference in the lives of our children," she said.

"Apart from that, the skills set, the expertise, the knowledge that is shared with our staff at the hospital goes a long way.

"Our staff are exposed to the work the team has been doing.

"We lack specialist skills in the country and everyone is aware of it.

"The visiting teams not only come and contribute to the welfare of the people and individual, but at the same time they leave behind a legacy for the staff and the hospital," Ms Akbar said.

She said that they were sure that the contribution from the Health Ministry and the staff had proven to be helpful to the foundation.

"We are always here to fill in the gaps from the Health Ministry and the Government side and always there to support to fill in the gaps," Ms Akbar said.

"At the end of the day, the difference that is made to individuals are amazing. They have done miracles," she added.

Edited by Epineri Vula

Feedback: ashna.kumar@fijisun.com.fj

BLOOD DRIVE

Good turnout for the sake of children



Ministry of Health and Medical Services phlebotomist Joiame Kauloto assists Apolla Duruvolo during the blood drive at the Health Ministry's Wellness Centre in Suva on April 17, 2018. Photos: Ashna Kumar

ASHNA KUMAR
SUVA

More than 10 people turned up yesterday to help save a life by donating blood during the Ministry of Health and Medical Services blood drive.

The blood drive coincides with the work of the Sai Prema Foundation visiting medical team which is in the country performing heart surgeries on children at the Colonial War Memorial Hospital.

The Ministry of Health's Wellness Centre public health adviser for Rheumatic heart disease programme, Dr Saimonere Bolaifuadua, said the blood drive was to boost their blood bank because surgeries for children were ongoing.

Within an hour of the drive, she said more than 10 people turned up to donate blood.

"We were overwhelmed to see the response from people to help save the children's lives," Dr Bolaifuadua said.

She said the advocacy on the blood drive had reached out to many of their work colleagues who also donated blood for the children involved in the surgeries.

Donor, Marla Mow, 34, who donated blood for the first time, said she was proud give some of her blood, especially for the children.

"It was a bit scary in the beginning because I had never given blood before, but it worked out for me because I kept thinking it is for the children," Ms Mow said.

"The children are the future of the country and to help them was a proud moment for me," she said.

Edited by George Kulamaiwasa

Feedback: ashna.kumar@fijisun.com.fj

SAI BABA'S PHILOSOPHY

We Want To Help the People of Fiji: Dr Tappoo

Sai Prema Foundation is opening a medical centre in Suva as it continues work to help the needy.

SELITA BOLANAVANUA
SUVA

The inspiration of this Foundation is based on the principles of our spiritual leader and Guru Sai Baba, whose philosophy is to help the poor and needy, to love all and serve all.

These were the words of Sai Prema Foundation Fiji medical co-ordinator Dr Krupali Tappoo.

Founded in 2016, Dr Tappoo said so far the foundation had achieved a lot in such a short time.

"Our aim is to help the poor and needy in Fiji through Medicare, SocioCare and Educare initiatives," she said.

"We need to help our fellow man kind, and if we are not of service to others, this life we live is not fulfilling our duty to this mother earth and to the world.

"It is easy for us to think about ourselves, to do our own work, to earn money and look after our family, but I think each one of us, there is some responsibility we have as well and if we are able to help anyone, that is a wonderful thing.

"The philosophy is we want to help the people of Fiji, and we want to help those who are in need.

"It has been an incredible journey," she said.

Dr Tappoo said the Foundation was working on 10 community service projects and at the moment they were focusing in the Tailevu area, in association with the Ministry of Health and Medical Services.

"If people are interested to become a volunteer, we are on *Facebook* and we are always happy to have more people come and help in whichever project they are interested in," he said.

Sai Prema Foundation Fiji is expected to open its medical centre along the Muanikau Road on April 27, 2018.

The Foundation also has a disaster relief programme.

Dr Tappoo said they would plan something shortly for the victims of the two recent cyclones and floods.

Sai Prema Foundation Fiji can be contacted on 8372361 or email saipremafiji@gmail.com.

You can also contact them on their *Facebook* page.

Edited by Mohammed Zulfikar

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The newly built Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Medical Centre at Muanikau in Suva. The centre is expected to open on April 27, 2018. *Photo: Simone Haravanua*



Sai Prema Foundation Fiji medical co-ordinator Dr Krupali Tappoo (left), paediatrics cardiothoracic surgeon and head surgeon of Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital Dr Ashish Katewa and US-based cardiologist for children and adults and a research pioneer in Congenital Heart Disease (CHD) Dr Sheun Setty during the Foundation's press conference at the Colonial War Memorial operation theatre lobby on April 22, 2018. *Photo: Simone Haravanua.*

SAI PREMA FOUNDATION

27 successful operations, international surgical team departs this week

Foundation's medical co-ordinator Dr Krupali Tappoo said they were grateful to all who helped, internationally and locally.

SELITA BOLANAVANUA
SUVA

An International surgical team that arrived two weeks ago to conduct life-saving surgeries on Fijian children born with anomalies in the structure of their hearts will leave this week.

Led by Dr Ashish Katewa of Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital in Jaipur, India, the team conducted 27 operations in nine days from April 13 to April 20, 2018.

The team comprises of world-class surgeons, doctors and specialist nurses from India, USA, Australia and Oman.

The charity heart surgeries were organised as part of the Sai Prema Foundation's Gift of Life initiative.

Sai Prema Foundation Fiji is a non-government organisation (NGO) founded to serve the underprivileged people of Fiji through medicare, educare and socioCare initiatives.

The Foundation's medical co-ordinator, Dr Krupali Tappoo, said they were grateful to have the surgeons and specialists in Fiji.

It was their second visit; their last visit was in 2016.

"Of the 27 operations, about 21 was done in the operating theatre and the rest in the Catheterisation (Cath) lab," Dr Tappoo said.

"It is quite a historic visit for Fiji and the South Pacific because we have never had any Paediatric procedures in the Cath lab.

"That's amazing using our local Cath lab.

"As a coordinator, I am really happy and proud of what the whole team achieved.

"Of course, it's a team effort and these would not have been possible without the support of the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital, Ministry of Health and Medical Services, the staff, the Paediatric department and the doctors.

"We are thrilled that we had 27 successful operations, and the Foundation hopes to continue this on an annual basis."

In 2016, Dr Katewa and his team gave 25 children a new lease of life after their heart defects were successfully operated on.

Edited by Mohammed Zulfikar

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AWARD

Dr Korrai honoured for the opportunity

Top training at a top hospital in Indian thanks to Sai Prema, Sathya Sai Sanjeevani.

SELITA BOLANAVANUA
SUVA

Doctor Maryanne Korrai was honoured to be given an opportunity for a three months training course at Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital in Raipur, India.

In partnership with Sai Prema Foundation, Dr Korrai will be the first local doctor to be sent there for such training free of charge.

Paediatrics cardiothoracic surgeon and head surgeon of Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital Dr Ashish Katewa said he was sure that Dr Korrai would return home well equipped after the course.

He said they would also extend their offer to train surgeons and nurses if qualities could be identified.

Sai Prema Foundation's medical co-ordinator Dr Krupali Tappoo said the model and aim of the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital and their Foundation was to provide free services and free training.

"She is the first of many and hopefully we will have more who will go to train and ultimately the solution is for Fiji to have its own Paediatrics unit in cases of emergencies," Dr Tappoo said.

"It is achievable and that is what we are aiming for.

"Teams will continue to come, what we need to do is to discover the local talents and train them so that Fiji can have their own Paediatric Services.



Doctor Maryanne Korrai. *Photo: Simone Haravanua*

"It is free."

Dr Korrai said she was thankful for the opportunity and thanked everyone that were involved in it.

"It will not be easy to leave my four children and husband behind but it's a small sacrifice to benefit Fiji as a whole," she said.

"I thank God and the Sai Prema Foundation for their trust to invest in me by sponsoring my effort to go to Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital.

"It's a big achievement and there are high expectations from my side to come back with sharper Echocardiography knowledge."

She said it was also another challenge for her department because now they will have one person less.

Dr Korrai leaves for India on Wednesday.

Edited by Mohammed Zulfikar

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HEART SURGERY

New Lease Of Life For Ronav

The single mother said every time her child was sick and taken to hospital he was not diagnosed with anything serious.

SHIRIKA SHALINI
SUVA

Ronav Chand's dream of becoming a doctor took a step closer to reality when the six-year-old was given a new lease of life.

Ronav, of Vuci, Nausori, underwent heart surgery at the Colonial War Memorial Hospital conducted by specialist doctors from India here through the Sai Prema Foundation.

His mother, Angeline Singh, who was with her son at the CWM Hospital operating theatre, was thankful that their six-month wait was over.

The single mother said every time her child was sick and taken to hospital he was not diagnosed with anything serious.

"After making several trips to hospital in our area we came to the CWM Hospital in November last year and doctors found that my child had a hole in his heart," she said.

"We were advised by doctors that the special team from India would be here in April."

Ms Singh said when she received the call from the hospital that the special team from India was in the country it brought happiness to their family.

"I am very grateful to the Sai Prema Foundation who organised the team's visit for people who cannot afford to travel to other countries for surgery," she said.

Her advice to members of the public is to take their children to the CWM Hospital for screening should they suspect their child suffers from a congenital heart disease.

Ronav said that he was happy to finally undergo surgery to fix the congenital heart disease he suffered from.

"From 4am I did not eat or drink anything I am very hungry, but after my operation I will eat a lot," he said.

Edited by Epineri Vula



From left: Nirmala Devi and Ronav Chand before his heart surgery at Colonial War Memorial Hospital in Suva, April 13, 2018.
Photo: Shirika Shalini

Visiting team completes mission

By LUKE NACEI

MORE than 20 children with heart problems were successfully operated on by a visiting international medical team at the Colonial War Memorial Hospital in Suva.

This was revealed by the Sai Prema Foundation of Fiji's medical co-ordinator, Dr Krupali Tappoo who said all surgeries were free.

"For the past week we've had surgeries," she said.

"This was the team's second trip to perform heart surgeries on children with congenital heart or heart defects."

Dr Tappoo said Sai Prema Foundation was humbled and proud to have collaborated with the Ministry of Health and Medical Services to bring this team of international doctors, nurses and specialists to our shores.

"This is their second trip and our plan is for this to happen every year."

Other than the surgeries and bringing in teams, Dr Tappoo said they were also interested in capacity building and training of local doctors and specialists.

"Visiting teams will come and operate on some children but there will always be some children missing out or rather die because there is no local team to help, so the ultimate aim is to build capacity, train our local people and have a unit in Fiji," she added.

The team consisted of surgeons from India, US and Oman and were brought in by the Sai Prema Foundation to provide these free services.



Dr Ashish Katewa (right) and his team perform heart surgery on a patient at CWM Hospital.
Picture: SUPPLIED

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Prime Minister Voreqe Bainimarama has commended the Sai Prema Foundation for sharing the Government's vision in providing Fijians the tools and resources to enjoy healthier and happier lives.
Photo: PRIYANKA LAL

PM extols foundation's work

PRIYANKA LAL

PRIME Minister Voreqe Bainimarama has commended the Sai Prema Foundation for sharing the Government's vision in providing Fijians the tools and resources to enjoy healthier and happier lives.

The foundation recently opened its $1.5 million medical facility, the new Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Medical Centre in Nasese, Suva.

While speaking at the opening, Prime Minister Bainimarama said the organisation was an invaluable partner to the Fijian Government as it assisted the underprivileged and needy in accessing expensive health care services for free.

"Through your Gift of Life programme in August 2016, you provided critical surgeries to 23 Fijian children here in Fiji, and were able to send another three overseas to undergo other surgical procedures. You've also brought an international team of doctors to Fiji in April who carried out free cardiac surgeries for 27 children," Prime Minister Bainimarama said.

In the past 18 months, the Sai Prema Foundation assisted 40 children through free heart surgeries which cost more than $4 million.

Other major initiatives of the foundation included medical scholarships to train Fiji-based doctors, serving the rural Fijian population through regular free medical camps, free food and clothing to poor families, blood collection drives, looking after the needs of orphaned children as well as disaster or need response initiatives.

The new medical centre, built on a piece of land donated by the Ministry of Health and Medical Services, will be managed by the Foundation's medical director Dr Krupali Tappoo.

Prime Minister Bainimarama said such public-private partnerships in the health sector will help expand the reach of medical services for Fijians.

"We are also pursuing a public-private partnership at the moment to massively develop and upgrade the Ba and Lautoka Hospitals.

"That PPP project alone will bring higher quality health services to around 380,000 Fijians. We are also very excited that it will make open heart surgeries available 24/7 right here in Fiji," PM Bainimarama added.

Sai Prema Foundation chairman and founding trustee, Mahendra Tappoo also announced the establishment of a children's heart hospital next to the newly-built medical centre.

"Immediate planning and development of a children's heart hospital next to the medical center will offer heart surgeries for the children of Fiji and the South Pacific free of cost," Mr Tappoo said.

The project would be undertaken in association with the Sai Sanjeevani Hospital in India.

Gift of life for mum, son

PRIYANKA LAL

KAVITA Karishma is a single parent who works part-time as a house help to earn a living and barely makes ends meet.

So when the news of her son suffering from a serious heart defect was relayed to her, it struck her down. The last thing on her mind was to lose her only hope, her son.

These days, the 33-year old from Narere on the outskirts of Suva City could only recount her tears of joy after her son was given a new lease of life following a successful heart operation.

Her six year old son, Ansh was diagnosed with congenital heart defect in 2013 and was one of the 27 children from Fiji who received medical treatment through the joint efforts of Sai Prema Foundation and the Fijian Health Ministry.

Both Kavita and Ansh are now able to live a normal life like the other 26 families assisted through this cooperation that saw doctors from India undertake free heart surgeries at the Colonial War Memorial Hospital.

"I came to know about Ansh's heart condition when he was one year six months old. He was playing at home and fainted so we brought him to the CWM Hospital children's ward and the doctor informed us that he had a hole in his heart and lungs. His valves were also not functioning well," Kavita said.

"An overseas doctor came and said Ansh was underweight and anaemic, and they would not be able to do the surgery. He said this could lead to heart failure but God answered my prayers when the Indian doctors came and did the operation."

Kavita adds that the Gift of Life initiative of the Sai Prema Foundation was nothing less than a miracle.

"Collecting $37,000 for the surgery was impossible for me because I don't have that kind of money. The doctors from India assured me not to lose hope and that they would bring back my son after the surgery.

"I am very happy to see my son play and be happy like other children, especially after doctors informed of his 50 per cent chance of survival and that he would die of heart failure at any time," Kavita added.

Children between the ages of two months and 14 years had undergone open heart surgeries last month performed by the doctors from Sai Sanjeevani Hospital in India.



Kavita Karishma with her son, Ansh, at the newly-opened Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Medical Centre at Nasese, Suva. Photo: PRIYANKA LAL

GIFT OF LIFE

FREE HEART SURGERIES

HEARTFELT GRATITUDE

Sai Prema Foundation Fiji
wishes to offer its heartfelt gratitude to:

- surgeons, doctors and medical personnel from India, Australia, USA & Oman representing the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital Raipur
- Fiji Ministry of Health & Medical Services
- CWM Hospital and its personnel
- Individuals and organisations

for graciously supporting our foundation's Gift of Life Free Heart Surgeries project for the children of Fiji.

26

LIVES WERE SAVED

Vodafone ATH Fiji Foundation

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TANDOOR

Children's Heart Foundation

Sai Prema Foundation Fiji

SRI SATHYA SAI SANJEEVANI HOSPITAL

MINISTRY of HEALTH & MEDICAL SERVICES
Shaping Fiji's Health

FIJI Sun

GIFT OF LIFE

$1 a Day

KEEPS TEARS AWAY



Sai Prema Foundation is committed to continue to save the lives of the children of Fiji through these **"Gift of Life"** Heart surgeries.

If you wish to donate, please send an email to saipremafiji@gmail.com with the following details:

Name: _____

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or Direct deposit to our account:

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Gift of Life

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Account No. 12940203

Address: 25 Victoria Parade, Suva, Fiji

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☐ I confirm that I would like to donate $1 a day (total of $365) to save the lives of underprivilged and needy children of Fiji and provide them with FREE life saving heart surgeries.