

Hearts4Kids Newsletter 2017

Lautoka Fiji Mission September 2017.

We are pleased to report that 19 Fijian children are getting on with learning, playing and filling their families' lives with joy after successful heart operations in September.

In 2017, the Hearts4Kids team avoided cyclones and a fuel crisis to make it over and back for five days of surgery and another 9 days of looking after 19 children from all over Fiji who were born with congenital heart defects or acquired heart damage due to rheumatic fever.

Surgeon, Kirsten Finucane and team put in 10hour days performing the surgery. The starship team of specialised doctors, nurses, anaesthetists, technicians and bypass perfusion specialists had all worked together and many had been on the 2015 mission.

Patients have come from all over Fiji, having been referred by local doctors and assessed at a clinic conducted by cardiologist Dr John Wright a month before surgery. A fourteen year old girl was assessed as requiring urgent surgery best undertaken at the starship so with the help of Rotary she flew back with the team and had surgery in Auckland and is now home doing well.





On arrival in Lautoka on the 6th September the team flew into action, taking over from the Friends of Fiji Heart Foundation who had just completed their mission. PICU and wards required setting up and the preoperative clinics were conducted.

Each day involved 3 to 5 operations. This year, more small babies were operated on but ages ranged from two months to 12 years. The final surgery was completed at 10pm on 12/9.

The resilience and bravery of these children is remarkable. 4 year old Vaseva took less than 24hrs to recover from major heart surgery to be up walking. Donated toys and games brightened the mood in the ward as children were stabilised in intensive care and then moved quickly onto the general ward when well enough.

The heat was oppressive for the kiwi team but families were experts in fanning and sponging their little ones

to keep them cool and as the days went past, the grins grew broader. Working alongside the Fijian nurses was such a mutually beneficial experience. The team took the opportunity for many formal and informal education sessions with doctors and nurses and also patient information sessions.

A tired team left Fiji on 17/9/17 with photos to remind them of the beautiful smiles of these brave children. We look forward to hearing of their progress as they attend follow up clinics.



Acknowledgements

Our grateful thanks to ALL individuals and organisations for supporting the 2017 Hearts4Kids Mission to Fiji. We would particularly like to acknowledge:

- Friends of Fiji Heart Foundation for Customs and shipping, and loan of equipment
- Staff at Lautoka Hospital, including consultants Dr Rigamoto Taito and Dr Joseph Kado, also Dr Khizar Niazi and Dr Losalini Ravulo Leweniqila
- Ministry of Health, Fiji
- Rotary Clubs of Eden, Epsom and Takapuna for help with fundraising and a Rotary Global Grant
- ROMAC for supporting a child transfer to NZ
- Children's Heart Foundation Fiji for providing patient support and transportation.
- All medical companies and their representatives for continued support and sponsorships, in particular:
 - Amedus – syringe drivers and Cardiocel
 - BD Medical – loan of syringe drivers
 - Device Technologies – surgical instruments
 - Downs Medical – saw blades
 - Draeger – loan of monitoring equipment
 - Edwards Life Sciences – implants
 - Global Medics- Clinell wipes
 - Halyard Medical– surgical gowns and drapes
 - Johnson & Johnson Medical– sutures
 - LivaNova – perfusion

- Macquet Medical Systems - perfusion
- Medical Aid Abroad – warehouse space and supplies
- Medtronic – sutures, surgical supplies, perfusion
- Obex Medical – perfusion, sutures, loan of fine instruments
- Rem Systems – loan of sternal saws
- Spectrumed – valves and pericardial patches
- Technisonic – warehouse and logistic support
- Terumo Medical Device Company – perfusion, financial support
- USL Medical – defibrillators and pads
- Vortek NZ - headlamp
- Cure Kids – loan of the echo machine
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- Sunila Lal and Dennis Lal – fundraising, including Shiv Katha
- Deepak Patel and family for coordinating the Fijian Volunteer team (transportation and catering) and help with fundraising
- Starship Children’s Hospital

Thanks to all our sponsors, large and small, for such wonderful support.

Quote from a Thank You card

***“WORDS CANNOT DESCRIBE THE JOY AND HOPE FOR A SECOND LIFE THAT YOU ALL HAVE GIVEN
AMANDA”***