



# Free Heart Surgeries for the Children of Fiji

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**Project Report**  
April 2019

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The Gift of Life  
project has  
helped **save**  
**71 lives**  
**in the last**  
**3 years**  
saving parents  
more than  
**\$7.1 Million**













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

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



# 17

children underwent  
open heart surgeries,  
catheterization lab  
procedures and other  
interventions in 2019 ,  
saving their families in  
excess of **FJD\$ 1.7 million.**

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







## A surprise visit by members of Fiji Rugby 7s Team

Sai Prema Foundation Fiji offers its heartfelt gratitude to our nations heroes for taking time out to visit the children recovering from surgery.







The most beautiful thing in the world is a child's **smile**. The next best thing? Knowing that **You** are the reason **behind it**.







**75 children**

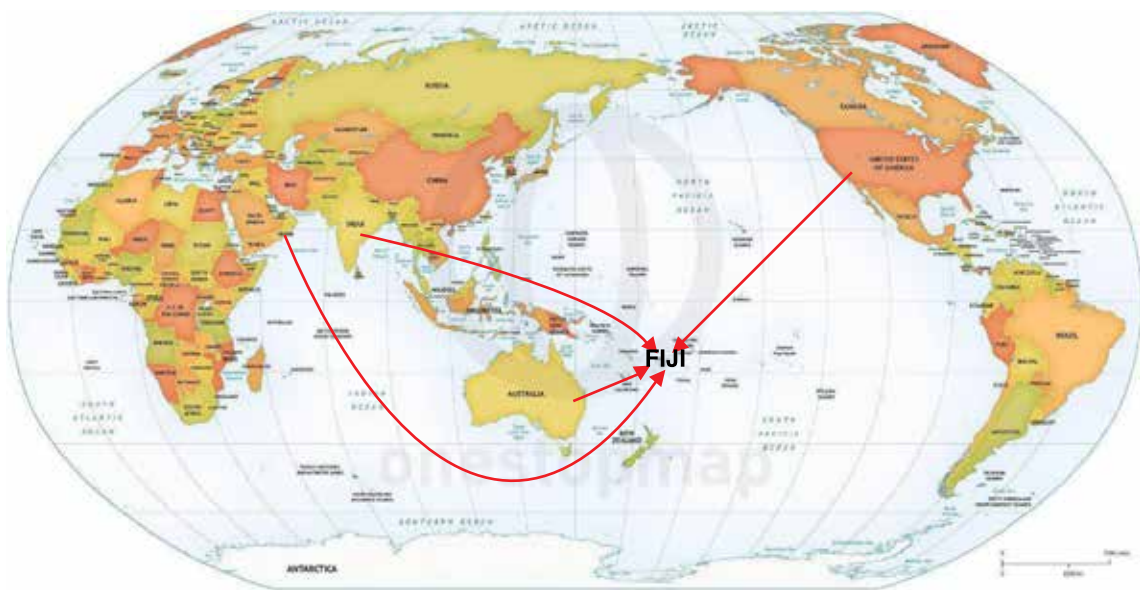
were screened completely  
free of cost for congenital  
heart disease at Sri Sthya  
Sai Sanjeevani Children's  
Heart Screening Centre at  
Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani  
Medical Centre.





# 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 Practitioner 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. Shivani Gajpal

### INDIA

Anaesthetist/Intensivist at the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital, Raipur, India

## Mr. Alok Verma

### INDIA

Surgeical Assistant, Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital, Raipur, India

## Ms. Pooja Gupta

### INDIA

Perfusionist at the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital, Raipur, India

## Ms. Sheeja Diwan

### AUSTRALIA

ICU Nurse, Pediatric Intensive Care, Lady Cilento Children's Hospital, Brisbane, Australia

## 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

## Mr. Sandy Tolentino

### USA

Scrub Nurse, Long Beach Medical Centre, California, USA

## Ms. Deborah Pegg

### AUSTRALIA

Clinical nurse educator, pediatric Intensive Care, Lady Cilento Children's Hospital, Brisbane, 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





# Recipients of the Gift of Life free heart surgeries, 2019

1.

**Name:** Skylar Lee  
**Age:** 7 years  
**Procedure received:** Atrial Septal Defect (ASD) Repair



Sumeet Tappoo, Dr. Krupali Tappoo, Ms. Kym Stuart, Dr. Ashish Katewa, Rajendra Kumar, Skylar Lee, Moira Lee, Varsha Kumar, Ms. Radhika Reddy (Asaleo Care), Dr. Maryanne Kora'ai, Soniya Lal, Mahendra Tappoo.

2.

**Name:** Shinal Sharma  
**Age:** 10 years  
**Procedure received:** Atrial Septal Defect (ASD) Repair



Varsha Kumar, Rajendra Kumar, Shinal Sharma, Ritesh Sharma, Mr. Nandu Naidu (Punjas Ltd), Dr. Ashish Katewa, Ms Kym Stuart.

3.

**Name:** Diana Lesumaivavalagi  
**Age:** 8 and half years  
**Procedure received:** Patent Ductus Arteriosus (PDA) Ligation



Soniya Lal, Ms. Kym Stuart, Varsha Kumar, Dr. Ashish Katewa, Diana Lesumaivavalagi, Ben Naitavuni, Mahendra Tappoo, Aarti Peel, Sr. Pradeep Kuar, Jeannie Peel, Robin James, Jason Peel, John Peel.

4.

**Name:** Ted Naisoro  
**Age:** 6 and half years  
**Procedure received:** Patent Ductus Arteriosus (PDA) Ligation



Ms. Kym Stuart, Dr. Ashish Katewa, Jeannie Peel, John Peel, Michelle Myers, Varsha Kumar, Ted Naisoro, Lavenia Traill, Rajendra Kumar, Mahendra Tappoo, Dr. Krupali Tappoo Soniya Lal

5.

**Name:** Ameer Ali  
**Age:** 4 and half years  
**Procedure received:** Patent Ductus Arteriosus (PDA) Ligation



Ameer Ali, Asnoor Ali, Kishore Rathod, Bipin Rathod, Rizwan Husein, Dr. Maryanne Kora'ai, Soniya Lal.

6.

**Name:** Alumita Totoka  
**Age:** 3 years  
**Procedure received:** Patent Ductus Arteriosus (PDA) Ligation



Dr. Maryanne Kora'ai, Rizwan Husein, Dr. Shereen Azad Ali & Azad Ali (Island Accommodation), Alumita Totoka, Mereseini Totoka, Peni Totoka, Dr. Krupali Tappoo, Sumeet Tappoo.



# Recipients of the Gift of Life free heart surgeries, 2019

7.

**Name:** Mere Volau  
**Age:** 5 years  
**Procedure received:** Patent Ductus Arteriosus (PDA) Ligation



Robin James, Namrata Tappoo, Aarti Peel, Mere Volau, Baseva Tubeta, Jason Peel, Jeannie Peel, Remal Tappoo, John Peel.

8.

**Name:** Ratu Josese Tuira  
**Age:** 5 and half years  
**Procedure received:** Ventricular Septal Defect (VSD) Repair



Remal Tappoo, Ratu Josese Tuira, Talica Waqabaca, Namrata Tappoo

9.

**Name:** Eric Raj  
**Age:** 8 and half years  
**Procedure received:** Atrial Septal Defect (ASD) Repair



Jyoti Tappoo, Eric Raj, Elvin Raj, Praveen Chand, Eric's Sister, Eric's Aunt, Kamlesh Tappoo

10.

**Name:** Dinaomi Tinai  
**Age:** 15 years  
**Procedure received:** Tetralogy of Fallot (TOF) Repair



Hema Rathod, Teresia Natoro, Dinaomi Tinai, Bharti Rathod

11.

**Name:** Peter Sidi  
**Age:** 2 years  
**Procedure received:** Ventricular Septal Defect (VSD) Repair



Vikash Sundar, Indra Deo, Peter Sidi, Lyn Sidi, Mahendra Tappoo.

12.

**Name:** Teninukai Kabutia  
**Age:** 12 years  
**Procedure received:** Atrial Septal Defect (ASD) Repair



H.E. Smt. Padmaja (Indian High Commissioner), Ann Pesaeli, Teninukai Kabutia, Sailasa Takali, Mahendra Tappoo.



# Recipients of the Gift of Life free heart surgeries, 2019

13.

**Name:** Kinisimere Takali

**Age:** 2 years

**Procedure received:** Tetralogy of Fallot (TOF) Repair



*H.E. Smt. Padmaja (Indian High Commissioner), Meri Lani, Kinisimere Takali, Dr. Maryanne Kora'ai, Soniya Lal, Mahendra Tappoo.*

14.

**Name:** Raynav Deo

**Age:** 3 years

**Procedure received:** Atrial Septal Defect (ASD) Repair



*Kamlesh Tappoo, Raynav Deo, Shamni Deo, Ravinesh Deo, H.E. Ms. Melanie Hopkins (British High Commissioner), Remal Tappoo, Soniya Lal.*

15.

**Name:** Etuate Lala

**Age:** 3 months

**Procedure received:** Pulmonary Stenosis Dilation



*Dr. Shivani Gajpal, Riwan Hussain, Kamlesh Tappoo, Etuate Lala, Ponipate Bainivalu, H.E. Ms. Melaine Hopkins (British High Commissioner), Soniya Lal, Dr. Maryanne Kora'ai Remal Tappoo.*

16.

**Name:** Ashnit Prasad

**Age:** 7 years

**Procedure received:** Pulmonary Stenosis Dilation



*Pooja Gupta, Dr. Maryanne Kora'ai, Kavita Wati, Ashnit Aman Prasad, Mahendra Tappoo Soniya Lal, Riwan Hussain.*

17.

**Name:** Britney Talei

**Age:** 3 years

**Procedure received:** Tetralogy of Fallot (TOF) Repair



*Kamlesh Tappoo, Britney Talei, Siteri Marama, H.E. Ms. Melanie Hopkins (British High Commissioner), Remal Tappoo.*



# Recipients of the Gift of Life free heart surgeries, 2018

1. **Name:** Amelia Samunigawe  
**Age:** 10 days old  
**Procedure received:** Ballon Septostomy (PICU)
2. **Name:** Ilivani Gaunilau  
**Age:** 2 months  
**Procedure received:** PDA Ligation
3. **Name:** Tomasi Senibiau  
**Age:** 5 months  
**Procedure received:** VSD Repair
4. **Name:** Mereseini Vulai  
**Age:** 10 months  
**Procedure received:** Chest drain inserted
5. **Name:** Ronika Sharma  
**Age:** 11 months  
**Procedure received:** TOF Repair
6. **Name:** Lavenia Cavora  
**Age:** 11 months  
**Procedure received:** Complete TOF repair
7. **Name:** Jhanvi Chand  
**Age:** 1 year  
**Procedure received:** PDA Ligation
8. **Name:** Timaima Bainivalu  
**Age:** 1 year  
**Procedure received:** PDA Ligation
9. **Name:** Aqela Cirimaitoga  
**Age:** 1 year  
**Procedure received:** PDA Ligation
10. **Name:** Ansh Kumar  
**Age:** 1 year 2 months  
**Procedure received:** VSD & ASD Repair
11. **Name:** Litiana Teri  
**Age:** 1 year 2 months  
**Procedure received:** CoA Repair & PDA Ligation
12. **Name:** Bhavishra Reddy  
**Age:** 2 years  
**Procedure received:** PDA Ligation
13. **Name:** Mareca Delaibatiki  
**Age:** 2 years 2 months  
**Procedure received:** PDA Ligation
14. **Name:** Jokapeti Roko  
**Age:** 3 years  
**Procedure received:** PDA Ligation
15. **Name:** Darsh Prasad  
**Age:** 3 years 3 months  
**Procedure received:** DCRV & VSD Repair. PFO closure
16. **Name:** Aarav Kumar  
**Age:** 5 years  
**Procedure received:** ASD Repair
17. **Name:** Ronav Chand  
**Age:** 5 years 9 months  
**Procedure received:** ASD Repair
18. **Name:** Shaniya Kumar  
**Age:** 6 years 2 months  
**Procedure received:** TAPVC Repair
19. **Name:** Nemani Mohammed  
**Age:** 6 years 2 months  
**Procedure received:** Pulmonary Balloon Valvuloplasty
20. **Name:** Mereani Suraki  
**Age:** 7 years  
**Procedure received:** PDA device closure
21. **Name:** Losalini Navila  
**Age:** 9 years  
**Procedure received:** ASD Repair Primary
22. **Name:** Ana Vitau  
**Age:** 9 years  
**Procedure received:** PDA Ligation
23. **Name:** Josefa Siwatibau  
**Age:** 9 years 2 months  
**Procedure received:** VSD Repair
24. **Name:** Shreya Sukul  
**Age:** 11 years  
**Procedure received:** ASD Repair
25. **Name:** Mereoni Sagatoro  
**Age:** 11 years 2 months  
**Procedure received:** TOF Repair
26. **Name:** Lupe Tikomaisawani  
**Age:** 15 years  
**Procedure received:** Rt Glen, ASD closure & Rt Atrioplasty VSD Repair



# Recipients of the Gift of Life free heart surgeries, 2016

1. **Name:** Elima Futu  
**Age:** 4 months  
**Procedure received:** PDA Ligation
2. **Name:** Vika Marama  
**Age:** 6 months  
**Procedure received:** PDA Ligation
3. **Name:** Ashley Dunn  
**Age:** 6 months  
**Procedure received:** VSD closure
4. **Name:** Pane Lovecena Talei  
**Age:** 9 months  
**Procedure received:** Intra-cardiac Repair of TOF
5. **Name:** Mitieli Laqere  
**Age:** 10 months  
**Procedure received:** PDA Ligation
6. **Name:** Selina Tukana  
**Age:** 10 months  
**Procedure received:** PDA Ligation
7. **Name:** Trissah Valentine  
**Age:** 1 year 1 month  
**Procedure received:** VSD closure
8. **Name:** Abdul Zohan  
**Age:** 1 year 3 months  
**Procedure received:** PDA Ligation
9. **Name:** Nihaal Singh  
**Age:** 1 year 4 months  
**Procedure received:** SV ASD closure & PAPV rerouting
10. **Name:** Sem Cagilau  
**Age:** 1 year 5 months  
**Procedure received:** PDA Ligation
11. **Name:** Baby of Movina Sharma  
**Age:** 1 year 6 months  
**Procedure received:** VSD closure
12. **Name:** Rahiman Imrana  
**Age:** 1 year 6 months  
**Procedure received:** Bilateral Bidirectional CP shunt
13. **Name:** Kajol Chand  
**Age:** 3 years  
**Procedure received:** PDA Ligation
14. **Name:** Furqan Faaz Hussaini  
**Age:** 3 years  
**Procedure received:** Intra-cardiac Repair of TOF
15. **Name:** Fausha Bibi  
**Age:** 4 years  
**Procedure received:** VSD closure
16. **Name:** Sione Simone  
**Age:** 4 years  
**Procedure received:** VSD closure
17. **Name:** Elenoa Koroi  
**Age:** 4 years  
**Procedure received:** PDA Ligation Chest drain
18. **Name:** Mereia Tinanitabua  
**Age:** 5 years  
**Procedure received:** ASD Repair
19. **Name:** Tale Yabaki  
**Age:** 5 years  
**Procedure received:** PDA Ligation
20. **Name:** Rishant Prasad  
**Age:** 1 year 7 months  
**Procedure received:** Intra-cardiac Repair of TOF
21. **Name:** Manvi Manisha  
**Age:** 10 years  
**Procedure received:** Sandwich patch repair, SVC Patch Augmentation
22. **Name:** Vaceseva Ilibeva  
**Age:** 11 years  
**Procedure received:** VSD closure and RVOT muscle bundle resection
23. **Name:** Manoa Tinavou  
**Age:** 11 years  
**Procedure received:** PDA Ligation
24. **Name:** Mere Nakata  
**Age:** 13 years  
**Procedure received:** VSD closure
25. **Name:** Margaret Fane Waqabata  
**Age:** 1 year  
**Procedure received:** VSD closure
26. **Name:** Pranisha Goundar  
**Age:** 1 year 8 months  
**Procedure received:** VSD closure
27. **Name:** Josphine Laddpeter  
**Age:** 15 years  
**Procedure received:** PDA Ligation
28. **Name:** Amayra Kumar  
**Age:** 10 months  
**Procedure received:** Bilateral Bidirectional CP shunt

# 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 Hospital India facilitated **Free Pediatric Congenital Heart Disease Surgeries** for the children of Fiji from the 29th April to the 8th of May 2019.

This was the third time that Sai Prema Foundation Fiji has facilitated the **free heart surgeries for the children of Fiji**. The previous visits have been in August 2016 where 23 successful heart surgeries were conducted and in April 2018 whereby a total of 26 surgeries and cardiac catheterisation procedures were conducted. 5 children were sent to India for surgery at Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital Raipur.

This year a 13 member international team conducted the children's Heart surgeries and screening led by **Dr Ashish Katewa**, a pediatric cardiothoracic surgeon from Sanjeevani Hospital in Raipur India. Five other team members came from India. This included **Dr. Shivani Gajpal** who is an anesthetist and intensivist, **Ms Pooja Gupta** who is a perfusionist, **Mr Alok Kumar Verma** who is a surgical assistant, **Mr Rizwan Husain** who is an ICU assistant and **Mr Rajveer Singh Choudhary** who is a Physician Assistant. Four team members came from Brisbane Australia. This included **Dr Benjamin Anderson** who is a pediatric interventional cardiologist, **Ms Kym Stuart** who is a surgical assistant, **Ms Deborah Pegg** who is an ICU nurse and **Ms Sheeja Godwin Deewan** who is also an ICU nurse. Two team members came from California United States. This included **Dr. Shaun Setty** who is an adult and pediatric cardiothoracic surgeon and **Mr Sandy Tolentino** who is a scrub nurse. One doctor came from Oman, **Dr Ranganathan** an anesthetist and intensivist.

**A total of 75 children were screened** by the Pediatric Cardiologist Dr. Benjamin Anderson together with our local Dr Maryanne Kora'ai. The children were screened from the 23rd to the 26th of April at the newly opened Children's Heart Screening Centre at the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Medical Centre. **A total of 17 cardiac surgeries** were performed by Dr Ashish Katewa and Dr Shaun Setty from the 29th of April till the 4th of May. **The youngest was a 3-month old baby and the oldest was a 15 year old child**. A child from the Solomon Islands was also a recipient of the free heart surgeries.

The Sai Prema Foundation facilitated and coordinated the entire project with support from the Ministry of Health and Medical Services for medications and consumables. In addition all the surgeries 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 Dr. Ifereimi Waqainabete and his team provided full support and at the conclusion of the surgeries and hosted a gratitude lunch for the team.



# Newspaper articles

## QUALITY HEALTHCARE

# Free Screening Offered for Children With Congenital Heart Disease

NEELAM PRASAD  
SUVA

**P**rime Minister Voreqe Bainimarama yesterday officiated at the inauguration of the children's heart screening centre within the Sai Prema Foundation Fiji.

The centre will offer free screening of cardiac related issues in children. The foundation is the brainchild of the Tappoo family in Fiji.

Mr Bainimarama said the Sai Prema had been an invaluable partner of the Fijian Government in realising the constitutional right of every Fijian to healthcare.

Chairman and Founding Trustee, Sai Prema Foundation Fiji Mahendra Tappoo said their primary focus, had been healthcare for the poor and needy, with a particular focus on children suffering from congenital heart disease.

"Why healthcare, and why congenital heart disease you might ask," Mr Tappoo said.

"It's because of the special expertise, constant guidance, invaluable advice, motivation, support and encouragement that we have and continue to receive from our sister organisations in India led by Sri Madhusudan, Sreenivas, Isaac Tigret, and Narasimha Murthy, who are all present here today.

"They are our mentors and they are guided and live by the principles of our founder Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

"We have been carrying out heart screenings of children in the rural villages. We have been bringing in a team of surgeons and support medical professionals led by Dr Ashish Katewa from our sister hospital in India – the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospitals India – to operate on our children free of charge for the past three years."

"We opened a Medical Centre last year. And now we have set up a children's heart screening centre within our Medical Centre, which will be officially inaugurated by the Prime Minister today (yesterday).

"We have the full support of the Prime Minister and his Government which has granted us land for that very purpose.

"We are working on a memorandum of agreement with the Government through the Minister for Health.

"This is work in progress. Whatever project we have done as a foundation has been in conjunction with the Ministry of Health and the Government.

"As an NGO, we see our role as supporting the Government in its efforts towards providing quality healthcare to the people of Fiji totally free of charge," he said.

Edited by Percy Kean

Feedback: neelam.prasad@fijisun.com.fj



Prime Minister Voreqe Bainimarama with the Minister for Health and Medical Services Dr Ifereimi Waqainabete at the inauguration of the children's heart screening centre within the Sai Prema Foundation Fiji on April 24, 2019. Photo: DEPTFO News

## Centre offers free heart screenings for children

By NEEHAL KHATRI

CHILDREN can now undergo free heart screenings at the newly opened Children's Heart Screening Centre based at the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Medical Centre in Suva.

Centre director Dr Krupali Tappoo, during the opening of the facility yesterday, said children would be screened for heart disease using an advanced \$200,000 echocardiography machine that had specific pediatric probes.

Dr Tappoo highlighted that about 200 children were born with congenital heart disease every year in Fiji and corrective surgery was the most effective therapy. She added that the Sai Prema Founda-

tion Fiji had helped 54 children undergo free congenital heart disease surgery conducted by an international team of medical professionals from the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital in Raipur, India – saving the children's families about \$5.4 million collectively.

The foundation also presented a mobile heart screening device – a HD stethoscope – to the Ministry of Health to assist in heart screenings for children in rural communities around the country.

On future plans, the foundation's chairman Mahendra Tappoo said they were partnering with the Government to establish a specialist children's heart hospital, the first of its kind in the South Pacific.

14 THE FIJI TIMES — THURSDAY, APRIL 25, 2019







## 200 born with heart disease annually

By VILIMAINA  
NAQELEVUKI

OF the 20,000 children born every year in Fiji, about 200 are born with congenital heart diseases.

This, according to Dr Krupali Rathod Tappoo, the director of the Sai Prema Foundation Fiji.

She said the whole process of screenings began with the electrocardiography which was the screening of the heart.

Dr Ashish Katewa, a visiting Indian paediatric cardiothoracic surgeon, recommended that mothers receive measles vaccination before their child is born.

"A young mother who wants to get pregnant should have their vaccination for measles as this would 100 per cent pre-

vent some of the congenital defects," he said.

He said another factor to consider was nutrition.

"Nutrition is very important."

"Paying attention to nutrition, especially for women wanting to conceive a child, starts from puberty."

"It's not that you think you're healthy that the baby you will conceive will be healthy as well."

He said another way of preventing a baby from developing a congenital heart defect was through ante-natal diagnosis.

"Some defects are very hard to fix and they would need multiple operations, and despite this the longevity is not guaranteed and they have a very poor quality of life."

The medical team who will be conducting open heart surgery for 20 children at the CWM Hospital in Suva.

Picture: JIVESA NAISUA



From left: Staff nurse Kym Seiwart, Dr Ashish Katewa, Minister for Health and Medical Services Dr Ifereimi Waqainabete, and Sai Prema Foundation chairman Mahendra Tappoo.

SAI PREMA FOUNDATION

## 17 Children Receive Free Heart Surgeries

AVINESH GOPAL  
SUVA

A three-month-old baby was among the 17 children who had a heart surgery operation in Suva in the past week.

The free surgeries were performed by chief surgeon, Dr Ashish Katewa and his team from Sanjeevani Hospital in India.

The team was on its third visit to the country, brought by the Sai Prema Foundation for its 'Gift of Life' programme.

Dr Katewa said since their first trip in October 2016, they had performed free heart surgeries on 71 children.

He said a problem seen was the late diagnosis in children, saying that he understood it was hard for parents to get their children to Suva for scanning.

"We also had two young heart surgeons participating with us in the surgeries. Training paediatric heart surgeons is not easy," he said.

"It's three years of training in India for these surgeons. We will provide free training to some doctors

**“It's three years of training in India for these surgeons. We will provide free training to some doctors from here, food and accommodation will be free too.”**

**Dr Ashish Katewa**  
Chief surgeon

from here, food and accommodation will be free too."

Dr Katewa said one of the 17 children operated on was from the Solomon Islands.

He also said Suva would soon become the hub of paediatric heart care in the South Pacific.

Sai Prema Foundation chairman Mahendra Tappoo said the founda-

tion was formed with the sole purpose of serving the poor and needy.

"The 'Gift of Life' is the most premier project and it gives us a lot of satisfaction to see needy children having heart surgeries," he said.

The Minister for Health and Medical Services, Dr Ifereimi Waqainabete, said it was a welcome journey and he thanked the Government and all those involved in making the programme successful.

Edited by Susana Tullau

Feedback: avinash.gopal@fijisun.com.fj





Ashereen Nisha (standing) showing support to her sister Sumeshni Ali (mother) and Ameer Ali. Photo: Kelera Sovasiga



SAI PREMA FOUNDATION

## Free Heart Surgery Saves Boy's Life

KELERA SOVASIGA  
SUVA

**F**our and a half year old Ameer Ali is expected to be feeling much better today after his successful free heart operation.

Thanks to the Sai Prema Foundation in conjunction with Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospitals India and the Ministry of Health. His surgery was conducted at the Colonial War Memorial Hospital in Suva.

The young boy's mother, Sumeshni Ali, said she was grateful to the incredible help done by surgeons and specialists to save her son's life.

"I am so thankful to God and to the surgeons for doing these free heart surgeries in Fiji for kids like my son," said Mrs Ali.

"My son kept having shortness of breath and we kept thinking he had asthma but after medical check-ups and clinics at CWM, we found out that he had a hole in his heart."

Ameer is among the 18-20 children who have and will be undergoing surgery in the next couple of days. Mrs Ali advises parents to always pay attention to their child's health from a very young age and not to take it for granted.

"Always seek medical help from hospitals and nearby medical facilities because you have all the right to know about your kid's health and it is the parent's responsibility to be attentive and not to be careless," said Mrs Ali.

After undergoing a three-hour surgery, Ameer is now recovering at the Intensive Care Unit.

The young recipients were identified with various heart complications after 76 children went through heart screenings last week in the Children's Heart Screening Centre at the Sri Sathya Sanjeevani Medical Centre in Nasese.

Surgeons and medical professionals from Fiji, India, USA, Australia and Oman led by surgeons Dr Ashish Katewa from the Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital India and Dr Shaun Shetty from the United States of America. The Sai Prema Foundation has assisted 54 children through the free heart surgeries project for the poor and needy children of Fiji since 2016.

Edited by Naisa Koroi

Find photo: kelera.sovasiga@fijisun.com.fj



## 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.

# 17

## LIVES WERE SAVED

Supported By



Vodafone  
ATH Fiji  
Foundation



A Project  
By



SRI SATHYA SAI  
SANJEEVANI HOSPITAL









**Sai Prema Foundation Fiji** 

**Love All ~ Serve All**



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