

Grand Opening of The Guyana Burn Care Unit

December 6, 2002

On Sunday November 10, 2002, Mrs. Janet Jagan and Mrs. Pamela Harakh officially opened the Guyana Burn Care Unit at Georgetown Public Hospital Cooperation. The opening ceremony was well attended by the Minister of Health, Dr. Leslie Ramsamy, invited guests, hospital staff and overseas volunteers & donors.

This "Labour of Love" is a joint initiative with Guyanese in Canada and the Georgetown Public Hospital in Guyana. This 3500 square foot, 6 bed Burn Care Unit is the 1st of its' kind in Guyana and will be key in providing free care and burn reconstruction surgery for adult and pediatric burn patients. Presently, there are many individuals suffering from gasoline, kerosene and acid burns in Guyana.

The dedicated group from Toronto who have worked for the past 2+ years on this initiative are: Mr. Harry Harakh, Mrs. Pamela Harakh, Mrs. Jennifer D'Andrade, Miss. Geeta Singh, Mr. Noel Denny, Mr. Desmond DeBarros, Mrs. Joan DeBarros and Mr. Sherman DelSol.

The Guyanese community in Canada have been tremendously supportive and have generously donated approximately \$120 000.00 to date. Several successful fundraising events were held to raise the much needed money for the Guyana Burn Care Unit. These included a brunch and cultural show in March 2001, an Indian cultural show in April 2001 and a golf tournament & dinner in May 2002. All events were well attended and significant in reaching the fundraising goals.

Many businesses, organizations and professionals have also generously lent their support for this project. One such individual is Ms. Judy Knighton who is the Clinical Nurse Burn Specialist at the Ross Tilley Burn Centre at Sunnybrook and Women's College Hospital in Toronto. Ms. Knighton accompanied the group recently to Guyana and worked with the nurses and staff allocated for the Burn Care Unit to provide burn care education. Ms. Knighton was very impressed with the level of dedication and enthusiasm from the staff and appropriately referred to burn care nursing as, "...special people, special care".

This group from Toronto plan to remain involved with this project for the next 2 years to provide on-going education and support to the hospital and staff in Guyana. They hope to decrease the pain and suffering endured by burn patients. They want to ensure that this project succeeds and that burn patients in Guyana have a better chance to survive and be productive members of society.