Grenada Voluntary Hospital Committee
1967 - 2007

Giving Grenada a helping hand for forty years
“THIS ISLAND TAUGHT MY FATHER TO BE A FARMER.
IT TAUGHT ME TO BE A SURGEON.
IMAGINE WHAT IT WILL TEACH MY CHILDREN.”

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Message from

Claude Sylvester
Chairperson
Grenada Voluntary Hospital Committee (London)

It is a privilege to serve as chairperson of the Grenada Voluntary Hospital Committee (GVHC) on the occasion of its 40th anniversary. The credit for this achievement rightly belongs to all members, past and present, for their commitment and generosity of spirit. They were motivated by their love for Grenada and their desire to make a contribution to the advancement of the welfare of their fellow brothers and sisters in Grenada.

We all believe that voluntary work to help others is commendable but we tend to leave it up to others and for this reason I take my hat off to those that have become involved.

The Holy Bible tells about the three wise men that brought gifts to the baby Jesus. It is fitting to pay homage to the three wise women – Mrs Dearest Gibbs (deceased), Mrs Lyris Buckmire and Ms Joyce David – who gave birth to the GVHC in 1967, extended the precious gift of a hand of friendship from London to Grenada and resurrected the Grenadian spirit in Britain. As true disciples, the best tribute that we can give to their legacy is to continue to build on the foundation that they have laid.

The GVHC has had to surmount many challenges during the last 40 years, and to have survived for this long is testimony to the commitment and resilience of its membership. It is also fitting to acknowledge the leadership qualities of Eunice Sandy-David and Joan Templeman who had steered the group through difficult times. God has showered the GVHC with many blessings and long may he continue to do so.

I am proud to have been involved in an organisation that has made a contribution to the welfare of the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. In July 2006 the GVHC assisted the St Martin’s Home for the Aged in Crochu, St Andrew’s and I was swollen with pride that we had helped some of Grenada’s senior citizens.

I wish to thank our supporters for the confidence that have shown in us; they have remained loyal through the years. We value your support and assure you that your continued support will enable us to continue to contribute to Grenada’s reconstruction and development – with your support we will continue to bat for Grenada and bat with confidence.

Let us all take inspiration from the words of John F Kennedy, former president of America, “ask not what Grenada could do for me, but what I can do for Grenada”.

God bless you all.

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“Ask not what Grenada could do for me, but what I can do for Grenada”
It gives me the great pleasure to extend heartiest congratulation and best wishes to the Grenada Voluntary Hospital Committee (GVHC) on the occasion of its 40th Anniversary.

Over those years, the GVHC have made outstanding contributions to the development of healthcare in Grenada, Carriacou and Petit Martinique with special reference to its support for the new hospital project by way of the provision of privacy screens for the female ward, support for the children's ward, and numerous donations of financial and material assistance. Most recently the provision of £5,000 worth of materials for the St. Martin's Home for the Aged, Crochu, St. David's. All of these efforts speak volumes for the calibre of the GVHC's membership.

In my short tenure as High Commissioner, I have found the GVHC to be a dependable ally and have met with nothing but its kindness, encouragement and support for which I thank you. It for these reasons that I sincerely wish the Grenada Voluntary Hospital Committee – UK continued success and I look forward to working with you in the interest of the further development of the healthcare system in our beloved homeland.

The Grenada Voluntary Hospital Committee (GVHC) was formed by three Grenadian nurses in 1967. It is a registered charity and is one of the oldest Grenada-focussed voluntary groups in Britain. Grenada’s serving High Commissioner to London has traditionally been its Patron.

The objectives of the Grenada Voluntary Hospital Committee (GVHC) are:

(a) The relief of sickness in the state of Grenada, Carriacou and Petit Martinique, supporting the charitable work of hospitals and other similar institutions, by financial and material contributions . . .

(b) The relief of sickness in the Caribbean territories in such ways as the Executive Committee may from time to time decide and the rendering of relief to persons who are in circumstances of need, hardship and distress.

(c) To raise the awareness of health issues amongst the African/Caribbean community . . .

The GVHC has supported the General Hospital in Grenada since 1967. It has also supported the St Martin’s Home for the Aged in Crochu, St Andrews, Princess Alice Hospital, .

In June 2004 the GVHC adopted the Female Medical Ward of the General Hospital and a plaque has been placed at the ward in recognition. Prior to adopting the Female Medical Ward the GVHC sponsored the children’s ward (Norton Ward) for many years.

In January 2004 Grenada’s Prime Minister awarded the GVHC a certificate in recognition for its “outstanding contribution” to health care and social development in Grenada.

In July 2005 the GVHC helped finance a project to re-equip schools in Grenada with computers that were lost as a result of hurricane Ivan.

In October 2005 the High Commissioner for Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique (London) awarded the GVHC a certificate in recognition for its contribution to the relief effort following hurricane Ivan that devastated Grenada in September 2004.

During the last 20 years several GVHC members have returned to Grenada and have continued to be involved in voluntary work for hospitals and old people’s homes.

Message from the Governor General of Grenada
Sir Daniel Williams, GCMG, QC

The Grenada Voluntary Hospital Committee should be justly proud of its record of forty years of continuous services to its homeland Grenada. The past and the present members should be highly commended for undertaking this very useful, honourable and charitable work. The results of the work of the Committee provide two special benefits. One is, helping in the health services of Grenada in the hospitals and other institutions; the impact of those contributions is felt, and for this, the people of Grenada are very grateful. The other benefit is touching the conscience of people generally so that those who were asleep as to doing some good for mankind will rouse the spirit of goodness in them, and as we unlock more and more goodness in people we would be in the direction of promoting a better world.

I hope that the Grenada Voluntary Hospital Committee will be sustained in its vision of selfless contribution with its magnanimous service to Grenada and as a consequence mankind.

I wish the committee abundant success in its endeavours.

Message from the
High Commissioner for Grenada – London
Joseph S. Charter

The Grenada Voluntary Hospital Committee – LONDON (GVHC)
1967 – 2007
Message from the Prime Minister of Grenada
Rt Hon Dr Keith C Mitchell

I thank you for your invitation on this auspicious occasion. Forty years in any endeavour is remarkable by any standard of measurement and I am heartened that Grenada is in your focus. On behalf of the Government and People of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, I commend the Grenada Voluntary Hospital Committe (GVHC) of London for its philanthropic commitment and long-standing support.

The objectives of GVHC to offer relief of sickness and raise the awareness of health issues in Grenada, is of critical value and a timely and noble gesture. Your invaluable support in the aftermath of hurricanes Ivan and Emily went a long way in assisting with our restoration.

Today we are proud to know that we are building back better than we were before. The hotel and housing stock are much improved, and major roads and bridges were expanded and rebuilt. We are now in full construction of the 2nd Phase of our new General Hospital.

The preparation for Cricket World Cup 2007, allowed us to leapfrog our infrastructural development by five (5) years. The part our people played in cleaning and beautifying their communities was something to behold. We did an excellent job in welcoming the World to the “Spice of the Caribbean.”

The benefits derived from Grenada’s World Cup experience are enormous and is detailed in my World Cup speech. We can only reap these benefits if we all work together.

However, we will never rest on our laurels because we know that there is still more work to be done. The rave reviews Grenada earned during our successful hosting of Cricket World Cup is unprecedented. We were able to give a much needed boost the World Cup by delivering the best package of games while showcase one of the best Cricketing facilities in the world.

There was resounding praise for our special brand of hospitality and honesty, our accommodating infrastructural development, and best of all, the unmatched beauty of our blessed country. You would have loved to hear the complimentary remarks and praise heaped on Grenada from viewers abroad, players, officials, visitors as well as nationals. This is extremely encouraging and further energizes this Government as we steadfastly continue to deliver on our developmental Master Plan.

This was really an occasion when Grenadians proudly stood up in the eyes of the world and were counted as we made a good account of ourselves. We succeeded in convincing the international community that Grenada is indeed back in business, serious business. Our ability to successfully host this magnificent world-class event is further testament of that fact.

The case of the taxi driver who found a wallet in his vehicle and went out of his way to find the appreciative visitor with his wallet intact was a perfect example of Grenadian spirit. It exemplified the virtue of honesty… the fact that our people are by nature “Good.”

Our beloved West Indies cricket team did not perform at the level we have grown to expect - but in reality Grenada emerged a Winner. The major legacy for Grenada coming out of our World Cup experience is our ability to achieve despite the tremendous odds and criticisms. It is encouraging to know that when confronted with challenges we as a people possess the capacity even though it has stretched and strained us to bind together for the common good.

Our People as well as the international community are taking notice so I encourage you to take full advantage of the opportunities presented. Grenada is well positioned to achieve significant growth – there is vibrancy in the economy and investment interests are mounting - be a part of it.

We encourage public private sector partnerships. We have provided many initiatives that will facilitate continued economic growth; along with new incentives for an improved and more flexible investment climate. We have many major investment projects on stream and many more soon to come – such as Port Louis, Mt. Hartman-Hog Island, Ft. Jeudy (St. George’s), Levera-Bathway Hotel Development (St. Patrick’s), Bacolet Bay (St. David’s), Black Bay (St. John’s), Grand Bacolet (St. Andrew’s), Mt. Edgecombe (St. Mark’s) and others.

This Government has been doing everything possible to address, in a holistic way, the development of Grenada. A national investment strategy has been developed that is attracting more bona fide investors and work is underway to modernize the regulations in this regard. These and other developments are serving to facilitate private sector investment which is so important in enhancing growth and revenue for our country.

Over the years, Organizations like yours have provided a significant source of inspiration. Your contribution has to be credited for the progress we have achieved in realizing our vision for a peaceful, healthy, educated, productive and prosperous Nation.

We have made considerable progress in revising outdated policies and developing new strategies. We are in open competition in aggressively competitive markets. My Government will continue to advocate and broaden its scope of operations in this dynamic global market. We have had to adjust to global changes fueled by rapid technological advancements.

To date, we have spent well over 86 million dollars building and repairing homes. We have spent over 82 million dollars on school rehabilitation. Over 60 million dollars have been spent on community centres, health centres, police stations and public buildings. Over 50 million dollars have been spent on resuscitating and revitalizing our Agriculture and Fisheries Industry. We are now spending over $30 million on the construction of the Second Phase of the General Hospital.

We have made significant advancements in rebuilding the Nation’s infrastructure, public buildings, police stations, schools, medical facilities, agriculture and manufacturing sectors, tourism industry, and thousands of houses for the most vulnerable families.

This government knows the importance of Health Care. Our mission is to promote and provide health services that are appropriate, accessible, equitable and sustainable, utilizing suitably qualified and motivated staff committed to excellence and professionalism. Also, we aim to encourage the improvement, protection, maintenance and preservation of our fragile ecosystem on a sustainable basis.

Our vision calls for an enhanced quality of life, improved health status of individuals, families and communities and maintenance of a state of optimum wellness. And our basic philosophy is that of a Primary Health Care approach using Health Promotion Strategies.

The challenges before us are of an ongoing nature, and there is still much to be done... but you can rest assured that your country is in good and capable hands.

It is our hope that you are able to transmit the good news to our extended family and friends. Please keep up the good work. Let us continue the challenge of moving this blessed country forward.

May the good Lord guide and keep you all.

Giving Grenada a helping hand for forty years

Rt Hon Dr Keith C Mitchell
Prime Minister of Grenada
Thank you GVHC

The General Hospital is the main Public Hospital in the tri-island state of Grenada Carriacou and Petit Martinique, with a bed capacity of one hundred and ninety six (196). The Female Medical Ward is situated on the second floor of the main building and has a bed capacity of twenty six (26). The Grenada Voluntary Hospital Committee (GVHC) has been a sponsor to this unit since 2005. Over the years this committee has provided much needed assistance in the form of equipment and supplies. These have contributed greatly to the ability of the staff to deliver care and enhanced the comfort of our patients.

On behalf of the staff and patients of this unit, I take this opportunity to express our sincerest gratitude and appreciation to the GVHC for their continued interest in the Female Medical Ward, and the sacrifices made on our behalf. I also want to take the opportunity to thank the persons who patronize the fundraising activities of this committee. Your continued support of this worthy venture is anticipated and appreciated.

We are looking forward to closer collaboration with the GVHC in the future. We graciously invite the committee to consider extending their sponsorship to include the Male Medical Ward, and also to partner with the medical wards in initiatives geared towards motivation and staff development. We believe that by recognizing the efforts of our staff and by seeking opportunities for their continued growth, we will get the best from them in return, and the quality of our patient care will be further improve.

We take this opportunity also to recognize one of the longest serving sisters of the Female Medical Ward who retires in June this year. Mrs. June DeRoche Noel, Senior Ward Sister, gave yeoman’s service for the past thirty eight (38) years. We salute her achievements and wish her a happy and health retirement.

Thank you GVHC. Your support means a lot to us. God’s richest blessings in your endeavours.

Anoris Martin-Charles, Departmental Sister (Ag) Medical Wards, General Hospital, Grenada.
Giving Grenada a helping hand for forty years

Message from
Joslyn R. Whiteman
Grenada’s Ambassador to China

“Voluntary service is the most rewarding contribution one can make to one’s country”

It is both my honor and my pleasure to join the many well wishers in applauding Grenada Voluntary Hospital Committee (GVHC) on the attainment of your 40th Anniversary. 40 years of dedicated service to the people of our tri island state is an achievement for which you must be justly proud.

The founding members some of whom have passed on must be regarded as visionaries to have had the foresight to create an organization that can go on providing service to our countrymen well into the future.

I have had the good fortune to follow and observe with admiration the progress of GVHC from inception, and I dare say that over the years you have always approached your work with a sense of purpose and dedication. The work which you do is very important and can grow in importance because of the element of humanity attached to it.

Let me take the opportunity to thank the leadership of GVHC both past and present on behalf of all the people you serve, for your selfless effort in contributing to an enhanced quality of life for your countrymen. “May God continue to shower blessings on your organization. “Happy Anniversary”.

Message from
Eunice Sandy-David
Former GVHC Chairperson

Sincere congratulations on reaching your 40th Anniversary. Your contributions towards improving the quality of life of numerous citizens in our beautiful country, has been significant. I was indeed honored to have had the opportunity to be the Chairperson of the GVHC for approximately ten years, prior to returning to Grenada. During my tenure I recall the hard-working GVHC family who contributed a Lister Generator and a multi-purpose maternity bed towards the health services of the Princess Alice Hospital and several other health related donations to Grenada and neighbouring territories.

The GVHC family has sustained its objectives and should be highly applauded. It is forty years since our founding members (Ms. Dearest Gibbs, Ms Joyce David and Lyris Buckmire) realized their dream. Sadly Ms. Gibbs is no longer with us, but I am sure that she is well pleased with the Committee’s developments. Voluntary work requires a certain level of commitment and the GVHC family has certainly demonstrated same over the years.

As one of the oldest serving voluntary groups in Britain I commend your ongoing initiatives and the more recent adoption of the Female Medical Ward at the General Hospital enables you to respond to identified needs.

I trust that the Dinner and Dance and Cultural Evening will be a resounding success. May God continue to bless the GVHC family in a special way.

Happy 40th Anniversary to Grenada Voluntary Hospital Committee (London)

from
Joan Templeman
Past Chairperson and Member

I start by saying what a blessed day in May 1967, when the first three pioneers (Mrs Lyris Buckmire, Miss Joyce David and Mrs Dearest Gibbs(deceased) all friends and former nurses in Grenada. These ladies were discussing ways of assisting the less fortunate back in Grenada.

Little did they know, that this discussion started with enlisting many other members in forming a group in which the first fund raising event was held, the proceeds of which went to purchase a clock that was presented to the nurses home in the General Hospital in Grenada in 1968.

From then on, many fund raising events were held, donations were made also in kind. We had a “soft spot” for children and assisted the Norton, Children Ward for many years. Donations were also given to Princess Alice, Princess Royal and The General Hospitals and many other institutions over the 40 years.

From the humble beginning in 1967 to 2007 (40 years after), I must say how honoured I am to have been part of the G.V.H.C. family. I started 37 years ago as the Assistant Secretary, Secretary and then Chairperson for just over 10 years. Although in Grenada, I am still part of this long standing Committee by assisting the Chairperson, Mr Claude Sylvester, in making enquiries via the Hospitals and Institutions where assistance is requested and given by this group.

I wish the Grenada Voluntary Hospital Committee (London), God’s guidance as without him, many times when we stumbled AND DID NOT FALL, it was because he was holding us up and encouraging us in keeping up the good works already started. I sincerely hope that the present Executive remember all the past Executive and members, because without them all, we would and could not have reach this far.

I wish G.V.H.C. Happy 40th Anniversary/Birthday and ask God to continue guiding the present Executive, as many times they may feel like quitting, but when you remember the comfort and happiness being provided to many people back in our Homeland Grenada, you can’t but continue the good works.

Again, Happy 40th Anniversary to G.V.H.C.
Hermionie Hutchinson  
Membership Officer

I have been a member of the Grenada Voluntary Hospital Committee (GVHC) London for the past five years and have recently been appointed membership officer. My role includes the processing of new membership applications and the collection of annual subscriptions.

In addition, I assist other members in organising events/activities to raise funds for charitable purposes for the people of Grenada, Carriacou, and Petit Martinique.

This organisation is committed to raising awareness of health issues among the African Caribbean community and the relief of sickness in the Caribbean territories.

I am delighted to be a part of this organisation and on this 40th anniversary I wish to express heartiest congratulations to both past and present members.

Orlando A. Nurse – Former President

As we all prepare to celebrate the 40 years of GVHC it is important for us not only to reflect on our achievements but also to project our future goals.

In the early years of the association everyone’s role was of vital importance and we all worked tirelessly to build the membership.

I am proud today to have served GVHC and Grenada for over twenty years and I would like to give my sincere thanks to everyone who contributed and gave their support towards our aims and objectives.

Wayne H. Francis – Former Treasurer

In 1967, some forty (40) years ago, three brave Grenadian women – Lyris Buckingham, Joyce David and Mrs Dearest Gibbs – founded the Grenada Voluntary Hospital Committee (GVHC) to assist the dire needs of the Hospitals in Grenada and the sister isle of Carriacou.

The founders of the GVHC had a vision of a Grenadian/UK organization playing its part to contribute something to our homeland. Soon after the organisation was founded, others like Mrs. Thelma Mitchell and my deceased mother, Ruth Francis, became an integral part of GVHC. I became the Treasurer for a while, up until 1993.

Successive governments in Grenada have failed to acknowledge the efforts of ordinary Grenadians in the U.K. who have put themselves out to assist those here in Grenada who cannot help themselves. Help and assistance is still badly needed and I urge the GVHC to continue to pursue the vision, aims and objectives of its founder members.

Present members of the GVHC do not give up; encourage others, even those who are children of Grenadian parentage and who do not know our sweet, sweet Grenada. In closing, I wish the present Chairman, all the members and well wishers of the GVHC a very happy 40th Anniversary and God’s richest blessings to continue with your good work. Remember, a little will help someone along way.

Mr Samuel Sandy – Treasurer

As the Grenada Voluntary Hospital Committee celebrates 40 years as a voluntary organization in the United Kingdom, it gives me the greatest pleasure as the longest serving member residing in the United Kingdom in congratulating the former and present members for their contribution during the past 40 years.

Special regards to founder members that came together 40 years ago. Their desire was to contribute to healthcare provision in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

The organization was formed in early 1967. I immigrated to the United Kingdom in September 1967, and in November 1967 I was introduced to the committee by my late brother, Emmanuel Sandy and his daughter, Eunice Sandy David, who later served as chairperson for a number of years before returning to Grenada in the mid-eighties.

I have been treasurer for the last ten years.

Finally, the committee is experiencing a bit of an up turn. This is due to the solid effort by members during the last two years, and the donation solicited by Mrs Grace Sylvester, the chairperson’s wife, from the charity, Metropolis Music.

Joan Julien  
Secretary

I have been a long supportive member of GVHC drawn in by my aunt Mrs Ruth Francis. I have been secretary of this organisation for quite some years now and during this time, membership has grown, likewise my workload. I hope our determination and staying power would remain for a very long time in our continuation of good work to improve the conditions in our hospitals and institutions. We must remember and thank the early pioneers for their inspiration in forming this committee 40 years ago with pride. I wish GVHC the very best on its 40th anniversary and long may it continue its good work.

Mr Frank Wellington  
Coordinator

My first active role in GVH started in 1969, when I supported a fund raising event. It was a boat cruise on the River Thames. I enjoyed helping so I became a volunteer within the GVHC. I continued supporting the GVHC during the 1970s and became a member in the late 1970s. I have also acted as chair person and assistant chair person. I am now the coordinator.

As a fellow Grenadian I wanted to help my family and others in Grenada. I am glad that I have been a member of the organisation. I am fully committed to the group and I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the GVHC on reaching its 40th anniversary. Well done and may we celebrate many more years to come!
Joyce Lumsden  
Long-standing member

Joyce Lumsden was born on in the parish of St David’s in Grenada. She was educated at the Anglican High School in St George’s and served at the General Hospital and at the Richmond Hill Sanatorium in the early years of her nursing career. She migrated to England in 1960.

During the 1960s and 1970s Joyce trained and worked at several hospitals and became a State Registered Nurse and Midwife at the Luton Maternity Hospital. She obtained her District Nurse Certificate in 1975. In 1983 she worked as a Community Practical Work Teacher and later obtained a Diploma in Chiropody before taking early retirement due to ill health in 1993. Joyce’s career in the National Health Service (NHS) is well documented in the book “Many Rivers to Cross”, published by the NHS as a tribute to the contribution that West Indians have made to the NHS.

Joyce is also a member of several voluntary groups including, the Sunshine Group and the Grenada Voluntary Hospital Committee (GVHC). Each year Joyce and her family donates $500.00 (EC) to the child from her local village in Grenada who obtains the highest marks in the Common Entrance exams. The award has become known as the “Mama Philly Bursary” – a tribute to her mother who died in 2000.

Since retiring Joyce has devoted herself to promoting Grenada. She is an acknowledged expert on Grenada’s spices – and she is often referred to as “the Spice Lady”. She has visited many schools in Croydon (South London) and has become a household name in the area.

Joyce is a humble but exceptional person. She has demonstrated her commitment to the GVHC and a special place is reserved in her heart for the GVHC. She is always willing to go the extra mile to advance the welfare of her fellow brothers and sisters in Grenada. Joyce’s enthusiasm, motivation, energy and drive remain undiminished. Grenada is privileged to have produced such an outstanding daughter.

Long live the spirit of Joyce Lumsden!

Amanda Smith  
Youngest member

I was born and raised in London. My family originates from Morne Jaloux and Darbeau in Grenada. I first went to Grenada as a child and fell in love with Grenadian soca. I go to Grenada for carnival each year and I take part in the festivities and often DJ at night clubs. I also present a soca show on a radio station based in south London. I run the website “enjoygrenada.com” that gives information about Grenada to visitors. I am promoting “Soca in the City” in May 2007 – a live show that involves soca artists from Grenada and other Caribbean islands.

I was told about my family’s history many years ago. Many years ago a member of my family (Darbeau) gave land to the government for recreational use and the national stadium is located on the site.

In September 2004, having just returned from Grenada, one of my friends telephoned me and told me that Grenada was being hit by a hurricane. It soon became clear that the damage was considerable and help was needed urgently. I purchased some goods and essential equipment arranged travel to Grenada with two friends.

When we arrived we were shocked by the extent of the devastation. The need was great and we did the best we could to help my family and others to get back on their feet. Many homes were without roofs and we helped several families to cover their homes. I stayed in Grenada for three months.

I decided to continue to do whatever I could to help Grenada and I became involved in the Hurricane Ivan Award Ceremony in 2005 and I joined the GVHC shortly afterwards. Last year (2006) the GVHC assisted the St Martin’s Home for the aged. I was at the handover ceremony and I was particularly proud that we were able to help some of Grenada’s senior citizens.

I wish the G.V.H.C a happy 40th anniversary and hope to see many more years to come. I am the youngest member of the GVHC and I believe that more second generation Grenadians should get involved in helping Grenada.

God bless Grenada.

Friends of Grenada Hospitals

Friends of Grenada Hospital Association (UK) congratulate the Grenada Voluntary Hospital Committee (London) on this your 40th Anniversary. Long may you continue with the work that you are doing! Thank you for the support that you have given to us and we hope that we can continue our mutual support of each other.

Once again, we applaud and congratulate you.

Devi McDonald

Devi McDonald was born in Grenada and lives in the USA. She is an outstanding painter and her paintings are inspired by scenes in Grenada. Devi has donated one of her paintings to the GVHC for auction. You can view Devi’s work through her website at www.deviart.net and see for yourself if these magnificent pieces do not envelop you in true and utter warmth and contentment that will satisfy your heart and soul. The GVHC applauds her generosity.
1. Hypertension (High Blood Pressure)

High blood pressure is when your blood pressure is constantly at a higher level than the recommended level of 140/85 or 130/80 if you have diabetes, kidney disease or disease of the heart & circulation.

It rarely makes people feel ill although it can cause headaches in a very small number of people, but only if their pressure is very high. Problem with sight, breathlessness and nose bleeds can sometimes be a sign of high blood pressure but the only way of knowing if you have high blood pressure is to have your blood pressure measured.

People of African-Caribbean origin are at a higher risk of high blood pressure than the rest of the population in the UK.

What causes high blood pressure?

In over 9 out of every 10 people (90%) there is no definite cause of high blood pressure. This condition is known as “Essential Hypertension”.

The following can play a part:-

1) Not doing enough physical activity
2) Being overweight
3) Having too much salt in your diet
4) Drinking too much alcohol, and
5) Not eating enough fruit & vegetables

Genes are another factor. So, if one or both of your parents have (or had) hypertension, you have a greater chance of developing it too.

How does high blood pressure affect your heart?

The higher your blood pressure, the shorter your life expectancy. People with high blood pressure run a higher risk of having a stroke (which damages the brain) or a heart attack.

If left untreated for a long time, high blood pressure can lead to kidney failure and even damage your sight. It can also make the heart abnormally large and less efficient (a condition called “Left Ventricular Hypertrophy”).

2. Obesity

When someone is obese it means they have put on weight to the point that it could seriously endanger their health. There are a number of reasons for obesity including certain medical conditions and genetic factors, but the main causes are eating too many calories and not doing enough exercise.

A measure called the Body Mass Index (BMI) is most commonly used to determine whether you are maintaining a healthy weight.

You can calculate your BMI by dividing your weight in kilograms by your height in metres squared.

A BMI of over 25 means you are overweight and a BMI of over 30 means you are obese. You are more likely to suffer from heart disease, a stroke, diabetes, and certain types of cancer, gout, restless sleep and osteoarthritis if you are obese.

People who carry too much weight put excessive strain on their weight-bearing joints, and this significantly increases the risk of developing the painful condition Osteoarthritis, according to the charity Arthritis Research Campaign.

Soaring obesity levels could result in an increased number of cancer cases, according to the charity Cancer Research UK. There is evidence of a link between obesity and cancers of the bowel and kidney, and women who are overweight may have an increased risk of breast cancer and womb cancer due to increased production of the hormone Oestrogen in their fatty tissue.

Being overweight also increases your risk of Type 2 Diabetes. Experts at the charity Diabetes UK say that over 80 percent of people with Type 2 Diabetes are overweight, and the more overweight and inactive you are the greater your risk.

3. Diabetes

Diabetes is a condition in which the amount of glucose (sugar) in the blood is too high because the body cannot use it properly. Glucose comes from the digestion of starchy foods such as bread, rice, potatoes, chapattis, yams and plantain, from sugar and other sweet foods, and from the liver which makes glucose.

There are two main types of diabetes. These are:

Type 1 diabetes
Type 2 diabetes

Type 1 diabetes – the body is unable to produce any Insulin. Usually appear before the age of 40 yrs. Accounts for between 5-15% of all people with diabetes.

Type 2 diabetes – the body can still make some Insulin but not enough or the Insulin that is produced does not work properly. (Known as Insulin resistance). In most cases this is linked with being overweight. It usually appears in people over the age of 40 yrs and accounts for between 85-95% of all people with diabetes.

Symptoms and signs of diabetes

- Increased thirst
- Going to the loo (for a wee) all the time, especially at night
- Extreme tiredness
- Weight loss
- Blurred vision
- Genital itching or regular episodes of thrush
- Slow healing of wounds
Giving Grenada a helping hand for forty years

Supporting patients and carers alike.

There are also excellent charitable organisations, e.g. Diabetes UK, who perform an excellent job in providing support is available. You must contact your GP or health professional.

If you are affected or are caring for someone affected by any of these conditions then please don't despair because help and support is available. You must contact your GP or health professional.

There are also excellent charitable organisations, e.g. Diabetes UK and the British Heart Foundation who performs an excellent job in supporting patients and carers alike.

Risk factors for type 1 diabetes

Insulin producing cells of the Pancreas have been destroyed. The cause is unknown but could possibly follow a viral infection.

Risk factors for type 2 diabetes

If you are white and over 40 yrs old or if you are black, Asian or from a minority ethnic group and over 25 yrs old and have one or more of the following risk factors, you should ask your GP for a test for diabetes.

- A close member of your family has type 2 diabetes
- You are overweight
- You have high blood pressure or you have had a heart attack or a stroke
- African-Caribbean or South Asian people who live in the UK are at least five times more likely to have diabetes than the white population.
- If you are a woman and you have had Gestational diabetes (i.e. diabetes during pregnancy)
- You have severe mental health problems
- You are a woman with Polycystic Ovary Syndrome and you are overweight.

Treatment of diabetes

Eating a balanced diet, managing your weight and following a healthy lifestyle together with taking any prescribed medication will benefit your health enormously.

Sometimes additional treatment is also required such as medication to control blood sugar, blood pressure and blood fats.

If you are affected or are caring for someone affected by any of these conditions then please don't despair because help and support is available. You must contact your GP or health professional.

There are also excellent charitable organisations, e.g. Diabetes UK and the British Heart Foundation who performs an excellent job in supporting patients and carers alike.

Sickle Cell

by Sharon Mensah RGN SCM

Haemoglobinopathy Counsellor

Sickle cell disease is an inherited disorder of haemoglobin – a substance in the red blood cells which gives blood its red colour and carries oxygen around the body. The usual type of haemoglobin is known as haemoglobin A (HBA). Most people have inherited HBA from both parents and therefore have HBAA.

It is thought that the sickle cell haemoglobin gene came about by a small change (mutation) in the A gene. This happened several years ago in countries where malaria was common. This is why haemoglobin S is found in people whose ancestors came from Africa, Asia, Middle and Far East countries and the Mediterranean.

Sickle cell is also seen, rarely, in white English people and other Northern Europeans because of intermarriage and subsequent genes moving between different ethnic groups.

If both parents inherited the sickle cell trait there is a 25 per cent chance that their baby will inherit sickle cell anemia (HBSS). What happens in sickle cell diseases is the red cell change from a normal round doughnut shape to the form of a farmer’s sickle. This happens when the haemoglobin gives up oxygen to the tissues resulting in these becoming jammed and blocking smaller blood vessels. This causes an attack of pain known as painful crises which can occur in any part of the body. Unlike normal blood cells, which live for 120 days, sickle red blood cells live for only 10-20 days and this result in anaemia.

These sufferers are left feeling tired due to a lack of energy and are prone to infections such as pneumonia, meningitis, strokes, blindness and other major organ damage.

Once diagnosed it is important that sufferers receive their primary course of immunisations, commence on penicillin and folic acid and be seen by a Haematologist. Regular medical appointments are necessary, even when sufferers are well. It is advisable for patients to avoid smoking or smoky areas and avoid excessive use of alcohol. In cold weather dress warmly. It is important to avoid stress, as this can trigger a sickling crisis.

At present there are 10,000 people affected in England. It is of great importance to continue raising awareness within the community so that people are aware of this serious genetic disorder.
David Thomas Pitt

David Thomas Pitt was born in Grenada on 3rd October 1913. He attended Grenada Boys’ Secondary school and was raised a devout Roman Catholic. In 1932 he won Grenada’s only overseas scholarship to attend the prestigious medical school at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland.

After graduating with honours, he returned to the West Indies in 1938 and practiced medicine in St. Vincent and Trinidad. There he met and married Dorothy Alleyne; they had three children.

Whilst in Trinidad he helped found the West Indian National Party, which campaigned for West Indian self-government. In 1947, he again travelled to Britain, and settled in London, where his involvement in politics continued.

In the 1959 general election, he was the first black West Indian UK parliamentary candidate, standing as Labour candidate for the north London constituency of Hampstead. In this election, he was defeated by the Conservative candidate, Henry Brooke. Two years later, in 1961, he was elected to the London County Council as member for Hackney, and served on the LCC and its successor, the Greater London Council, until 1975. He was deputy chair of the GLC from 1969-1970, and in 1974 he was the first black person to become chair of the GLC.

Pitt’s second attempt to be elected as an MP came in 1970, when he was the Labour candidate for Clapham. Although this had been seen as a safe seat for Labour, the Conservative William Shelton was elected, in an election which saw a national swing away from Labour. It has been suggested that his race was a factor in both general election defeats.

Pitt was no stranger to political controversy. Some Blacks hailed him as a Martin Luther King figure for leading the American-inspired Campaign Against Racial Discrimination. Under Pitt’s leadership CARD lobbied for change through legislation - like that enshrined in the US Civil Rights Act of 1964.

In 1975, the Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, recommended Pitt’s appointment to the House of Lords as a life peer, and he was created Baron Pitt of Hampstead. As a member of the House of Lords, he worked for racial equality and improvement of the inner cities. From 1985 to 1986 he was president of the British Medical Association, which he described as his most valued honour.

He remained a loyal son of Grenada and was buried there with full honours following his death in London on December 18, 1994.

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History of Grenada
1498 - 2007

1498  Christopher Columbus landed on the island on his third voyage to the New World. He named it “Conception” because it reminded him of southern Spain.

1650  Attempts by French to build a settlement. Met strong resistance from the native Caribs.

1782  Nutmegs introduced to Grenada

1783  France cedes Grenada to Britain. Slaves brought in from West Africa to work on plantations

1795  Rebellion against the British and slavery, led by Julien Fedon, who was inspired by the French Revolution. The rebellion lasted 14 months and at one stage controlled 90 per cent of the island. The town of Grenville was destroyed in the fighting. The Rebellion was finally put down in June 1796.

1833  Grenada became part of the Windward Islands Administration.

1834  Slavery abolished.

1885  1958 – Windwards Islands administered from Grenada.

1950  Trade Union Leader, Eric Mathew Gairy returns to Grenada from Aruba and forms the Grenada United Labour Party (GULP) and campaigns for improved conditions for workers

1955  Hurricane Janette causes considerable damage to the island

1958  Windward Islands Administration dissolved. Grenada becomes part of the Federation of the West Indies.

1962  West Indies Federation collapse

1967  Grenada granted full autonomy over its internal affairs – termed “associated statehood”

1974  Full independence was granted on February 7. Sir Eric Mathew Gairy becomes its first prime minister.

1979  The New Jewel Movement ousted Gairy in a nearly bloodless coup and established a people’s revolutionary government (PRG), headed by Maurice Bishop.

1983  A power struggle within the government resulted in the arrest of Bishop. Maurice Bishop and his colleagues were executed on 19th October and the Americans invaded on 25th October.

1984  Herbert Blaize becomes prime minister as part of a coalition government.

1986  Bernard Coard and 16 others convicted of the death of Maurice Bishop and others and sentenced to death, later commuted to life in prison. The trial remains controversial.

1989  Ben Jones becomes prime minister following the death of Herbert Blaize.

1991  Nicholas Braithwaite becomes prime minister in an inconclusive election.

1995  The NNP won eight seats and formed a government headed by Dr. Keith Mitchell. The NNP maintained and affirmed its hold on power when it took all fifteen parliamentary seats in the January 1999 elections.

2003  NNP narrowly wins third term – 8 seats

2004  Grenada was hit directly by category four Hurricane Ivan. The hurricane destroyed about 85% of the structures on the island, including the prison and the prime minister’s residence, killed thirty nine people, and destroyed most of the nutmeg crop. Grenada’s main economic mainstay. Grenada’s economy was set back several years by Hurricane Ivan’s impact. Hurricane Emily ravaged the island’s northern area part in June 2005.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

Hail Grenada Land of Ours
We pledge ourselves to thee
Heads, hearts and hands in unity
To reach our destiny
Ever conscious of God
Being proud of our heritage
may we with faith and courage
Aspire, build, advance
As one people, one family
God bless our Nation

Written by Irv Blackette nee Baptiste
Arranged by Louis Masanto
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1. The relief of sickness in the state of Grenada, Carriacou and Petit Martinique, supporting the charitable work of hospitals and other similar institutions, by financial and material contributions . . .

2. The relief of sickness in the Caribbean territories in such ways as the Executive Committee may from time to time decide and the rendering of relief to persons who are in circumstances of need, hardship and distress.

3. To raise the awareness of health issues amongst the African/Caribbean community . . .

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