



Paul Harrison Award 2010

The Paul Harrison Award is the highest honour that the Christian Medical College bestows on its alumni for selfless, steadfast and significant service in needy areas, under deprived conditions. Each year it is awarded to an unsung hero or heroine, quietly engaged in living out the motto of CMC, Not To be Ministered Unto, But To Minister, away from public attention. Dr. P. T. Abraham of the MBBS batch of 1962 joins this revered group today.

P. T. Abraham started his medical training in Vellore after completing graduation in Chemistry. He joined the Christa Mitra Ashram in Ankola, North Kannada, in 1970, after working in the Community Health Department of CMC for a year. He was greatly influenced by the life of Dr. Albert Schweitzer in choosing his vocation and also in moving to the mission field of Ankola. Ankola then was a remote, isolated and inaccessible place, wedged between the Arabian Sea and the Mysore forests, similar in many ways to the secluded African locale where Dr. Schweitzer worked. The Christa Mitra Ashram Hospital was started in 1948 in a very small way. Dr. Abraham joined Dr. Annamma Mathew there. Patients came from far flung areas, it being the only hospital for Ankola taluk and the only voluntary sector hospital for Uttara Kannada District. His wife, Chinnamma, a registered nurse, remained a tremendous source of encouragement in the work.

When patient load increased the infrastructure of the hospital had to be upgraded. Pharmacy, laboratory, medical records, X'ray, ECG, labour room and operation theatre were gradually added. Leading a small work force, which changed periodically was a real challenge. Recognizing the need for surgical skills Dr. Abraham and his wife trained in Oddanchatram for a year initially. Later he did M.S. General Surgery in CMC. He operated as a 'rural surgeon' and often the only doctor. He has performed more than 10,000 surgical procedures, always without an anaesthetist. He has treated hundreds of cases of poisonous snake bite, with just two mortalities. Through his devotion and leadership he was able to transform the small basic rural health centre into a full fledged secondary level hospital with 75 beds.

His community health and outreach activities have been very effective. He was able to improve the health indices in Ankola substantially. He was successful in eradicating several communicable diseases through the immunization initiatives. Dr. Abraham also played active role in fighting alcoholism and substance abuse in the community. He was involved in Gospel campaigns and village ministries and the activities of the North Canara Mission. He ably led the other service projects of the Ashram, in promoting education, caring for pre-school children and destitutes. All these meant working long hours, on several days extending to early morning. With no clerical assistance available, he typed out the various reports and handled all the correspondence singlehandedly.

When Dr. Abraham was due to retire from the hospital at the age of 60 there was no doctor to take over from him. So he continued for another four years until a suitable person joined. Because of his three decade long close association with the people of Ankola many of them requested him to continue service in the region. In 2004 he started a clinic through which he is serving several people even now.

For his unwavering commitment and unbroken service to the underserved people of Ankola, CMC is proud to present the Paul Harrison Award to

Dr. P. T. Abraham

DIRECTOR

PRINCIPAL

Vellore

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