



Paul Harrison Award 2013

The Paul Harrison Award of the Christian Medical College is presented to alumni for significant, steadfast and selfless service in the broad field of health, in situations of need or neglect. This year Dr. Daisy Rani Rao joins this honoured company.

Daisy Koilpillai was born in Bangalore and migrated to the United States of America at the age of five. After completing her schooling there, she returned to India and joined CMC, Vellore as a medical student in 1976 sponsored by the Seventh Day Adventist Mission.

Daisy's first real contact with rural India was during the Community Orientation Programme in her first year. During this period she realised the magnitude of the medical needs of the rural poor in the country. Inspired by Professors V. Benjamin and Abraham Joseph and through the postings in Community Health, she felt that God was calling her to serve the underprivileged and marginalised in India.

During internship she married Dr. Narendra Rao who was training in Community Medicine at JIPMER, Pondicherry. Their first main assignment was at the Giffard Memorial Hospital, Nuzvid in Andhra Pradesh. Both Daisy and Narendra had to work very hard as the hospital was on the verge of closure. Daisy was the only woman doctor and looked after Obstetrics and learnt how to do caesarean sections. Being in a remote area, she saw nearly every complication in Obstetrics. Her husband Narendra provided community and primary health care in the surrounding villages.

Seeing an unmet need, Daisy specialised in Ophthalmology and re-joined the same hospital. Following this training she worked mostly in Ophthalmology but continued to do on-calls in Obstetrics.

In view of a dire need in Aizawl, Mizoram, the Adventist Mission asked Daisy and Narendra to take up work in a hospital there. They had to start from scratch in terms of infrastructure and personnel. They also had to face the challenge of gaining the trust to community. Over time, their hard work and perseverance paid off. In addition to ophthalmology services, they also started a drug and alcohol detoxification and de-addiction programme. They also incorporated alternative medicine. After starting with a 10 bedded hospital, this increased to 25 beds including a hospice for patients with AIDS.

In 1999, in view of the difficulties in educating their own children, Daisy and Narendra requested to be relocated in South India and joined work at the Thanjavur Adventist Hospital. As this hospital was lacking in equipment and rooms for surgery, they raised funds through friends, relatives, Church members and organizations. Daisy focused on Ophthalmology and together they were able to conduct numerous eye camps and carry out surgery.

After their children joined college, Daisy and Narendra decided to move back to areas of greater need and joined the Leprosy Mission Hospital in Salur, Andhra Pradesh in 2004, a hospital which was also on the verge of closing down. Daisy had to revert back to work in both Ophthalmology as well as delivering babies and doing caesarean sections. It was due to Daisy's perseverance that CBM reconsidered its decision to withdraw support and now continues to support the hospital. Sensing a need, Daisy and Narendra focused on preventing Trachoma through village surveys, school health check-ups and health education which was common among the tribal people in the nearby hills.

Daisy now does near full time Ophthalmology and has a renovated operation theatre; however, as a doctor in a mission hospital she is competent and prepared to work in other disciplines as required.

Daisy's chosen life has meant adjusting to diverse cultures, work environments and schools; isolation from families, social networks and medical colleagues; family being afflicted by life threatening medical conditions in remote areas, and financial constraints.

Along with Narendra, Daisy's contribution to the ministry of healing has been outstanding and gone beyond the call of duty. She has responded to the many challenges of being a medical missionary. She is a role model for many and has lived up to the motto of her Alma mater "Not to be ministered unto but to minister".

CMC is proud to claim Daisy Rani Rao as an alumna and to honour her with the Paul Harrison Award - 2013.

Dr. Daisy Rani Rao

DIRECTOR

PRINCIPAL

Vellore
11.11.2013