

The College Motto award 2012

Drs. Shalini and Anil Ninan Cherian

Instituted by the batch of 1949, the College Motto Award, recognizes and celebrates each year an alumnus whose life and work has exemplified the motto of the Christian Medical College Vellore, “not to be served but to serve”. With determination, selflessness and courage, they have pursued their calling and for their exceptional contribution and service to the marginalized of our country, the seventh College Motto award is presented to Drs. Shalini and Anil Ninan Cherian, both from the batch of 1983.

If 1983 had a soul - Tina and Anil, as they were fondly called contributed greatly to it. Be it hostel policy making, music competitions, sports or theatre, Tina with her innate artistic capabilities, and Anil with his leadership and organizational skills and his guitar - were a critical part of it.

They sailed through both their UG and PG courses and in 1994 after completion of their post graduate training – Tina in OG and Anil in Paediatrics, and subsequently public health, the avenues open to them were numerous. But they had a passion – to work at the grass root level, empower the community through training and education and work towards equality of health. They dared to follow their dreams and stayed with mission hospitals, predominantly the EHA hospitals at Utraula and Chattarpur.

Starting off at the PremSewa Hospital, Utraula located in Balrampur District which was identified as the most backward district with regards to reproductive and child health in India in 1998, followed by a posting at Chattarpur since 2006, Tina and Anil managed both clinical and administrative responsibilities. They transformed a setting where hospital deliveries were taboo, trained dhais not allowed to assist deliveries, and untouchability rife, into a campus where more than 1500 caesarian sections were performed, where hospital utilization and deliveries increased by 350% and a successful adolescent girls’ training program on life skills and hygiene took off .

By training the nurses they demonstrated a feasible working model for settings with constraints in human resources. Being a HIV prone area, they embarked on education of the locals on HIV prevention Together they planned, implemented and supervised a Reproductive & Child Health Project in a population of 60,000 and coordinated with the government in the training of health professionals using the syndromic approach. Tina trained other medical teams for Emergency obstetric care after completing a training course in Sweden

Not limiting themselves to just hospital based projects, they managed a “child environment” project, focusing on safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, and also piloted the first Child Nutrition project based on the HEARTH model and true to the mission statement of CMC. Anil added alongside to service and teaching, the dimension of research, setting up the research cell at EHA.

Anil moved in 2007 to Delhi, as the Director of Community Health & Development for EHA, overseeing the implementation of 29 community health and development projects, spread over 7 states in the North and North east of India. He has developed and conceptualized EHA’s program of engagement with poor urban & rural communities in health & development, crossing the boundary of medicine, developing new programs like micro-health insurance and community based rehabilitation. He founded the Institute of Medical Missions (IMM), which was set up to prepare Christian Health Professionals for medical mission, and has been deeply involved in training. He has been involved in the evaluation of governmental and non governmental projects, acknowledged by the Institute of International Medicine, USA in 2008 with the HIV Leadership Award and represented the country at the 65th World health assembly in May 2012.

After more than 10 years of being the first call on duty, Tina has just moved to Delhi, taking a new position as coordinator for reproductive and Child Health Services at EHA where she will support 20 rural hospitals in training, establishing quality maternal health & neonatal care services, networking with the NRHM and the Safe Motherhood Programme in India and WHO in promoting Maternal & Neonatal Survival.

Eighteen years ago, with unwavering optimism and faith, they (in Martin Luther’s words) “dared to take the first step before they could see the whole staircase”. At tremendous personal cost and sacrifice, they have contributed generously with their time, wisdom and support and we have seen them raise the bar of clinical care, network across disciplines, within the country and beyond in an effort to pursue the cause of equality of health, health accessibility and empowerment of the community towards betterment of health. For their life of faith and commitment, effectively translated to one of service in the spirit of our alma mater, the CMC Alumni Association is proud to present the College Motto award 2012 to Drs. Shalini and Anil Cherian.

Awarded at the Annual Alumni Reunion in Vellore on 11th, August 2012.