

# George Subraj Funds Two More Kidney Transplantations

## 'WE PRAYED FOR A MIRACLE'

BY RICHARD B. MAHASE

BOTH men are from Upper Demerara, Region 10, Guyana; both in their fifties; both began encountering similar symptoms of End Stage Renal Failure (complete, or almost complete failure of the kidneys to function) in September last year.

As their situation exacerbated, and finances dried up, both prayed for a miracle – all of this while having never met one another but living just a few miles apart! However in a universe as mysterious as it is wonderful and not knowing for sure what destiny holds for any of us at any given time; not knowing for sure what lies beyond a prayer when man is most beaten; and not knowing for sure whose name is in this curious bag of miracles it's all part of a mystery that baffles and at times befuddles the most sober among us – all because we don't know!

The truth is many do have the ability and the means to perpetuate miracles on their own but few are prepared to be proactive. Preferring to wait and watch and watch and wait! However when one is trapped on a beach with many bathers around, nothing is as frustrating as watching the tide rising higher and higher, soon to suffocate you, and no one reaches out to help. Little did Mr. Alan Roberio, 54, and Mr. Rory Hamilton, 53, patients undergoing dialysis treatment three times weekly and becoming more and more frail; less and less hopeful; knew that in New York, many, many miles away, a special life-guard – Mr. George Subraj – was on his way, once again with

the brilliant, experienced Walter Reed Army Medical Centre team of volunteers – Dr. Rahul Jindal, Dr. Edward Falta, Dr. Stephen Guy and Dr. Alden Doyle both (Drexel University); and Dr. Arthur Womble.

George Subraj, the President of Zara Realty Holding Corp., like no one else in the past three years in Guyana, has worked so tirelessly to bring awareness of the suffocating circumstances of kidney failure and the plight of the poor, less fortunate patients. With each trip there have been innumerable difficulties – both in terms of logistics and administraton – but George valiantly surges forward, putting aside personal pains and pride so that the sick can receive "timely" help.

"If I have to stand holding a lantern for these doctors to work I will. I meet with these patients and just listening to them and looking into their eyes you know how desperate they are. I just cannot stand up and walk away from a patient who tells me he is about to drown in his sorrow and hopelessness. I have been doing this for a while now and your readers have probably seen this before but believe me each case is distinct. That's why even when it's a holiday or not, as it was last May 26th in Guyana, the medical and administrative teams started surgery at the Dr. Balwant Singh's Hospital, from 9am and for the next eight hours they worked on Alan Roberio and his sister said Mr. Subraj.

But on this trip unlike his previous stop over at Dr. Balwant Singh Hospital the team was going to undertake

two transplantations; so it meant that even the next day, the medical experts from the US will have to be back in the operating theatre barring no complications from Mr. Roberio's surgery.

### DISTINCTIVE SYMPTOMS

Alan Roberio is unmarried but has seven siblings. As a ship employee he is out at sea for lengthy periods. Early last year however, having returned home after five months on the open ocean he began to experience an itch. This was followed by a rash on his arms. A dermatologist treated him without any luck and a few months later he found his ankle began to swell.

Then later that year, September to be precise, the Portuguese-born Guyanese began feeling nauseous and started to vomit. A number of doctors failed to correctly diagnose his problems until he visited Georgetown and was diagnosed with kidney failure.

Similarly Mr. Rory Hamilton, a truck owner, and father of four, began feeling nauseous and started to throw up also last September. A subsequent trip to the doctor revealed the problems with his kidneys and the possibly dark days ahead for him and Mr. Roberio - if they could not find about \$40 000 US each for kidney transplantation possibly in India.

Ironically, when Mr. George Subraj and the medical team flew to Guyana, May 24, they were there fully briefed for two days of surgery but the patients were listed as Shermin Greene, 21, and Alan Roberio. However mere days before the surgery the tall, youthful Greene, developed an infection and his surgery was immediately deferred. Thus Mr. Rory Hamilton was examined and found ready for the surgery.

### MIRACLE

"We were praying all the time for a miracle," said Racquel Hamilton, 20, the daughter of Mr. Rory Hamilton.



(L-R) George Subraj, Alan Roberio and Winston George



(L-R) Dr. Balwant Singh, Jr., Gopinath and Kapildeo Rampersaud and George Subraj



(L-R standing) Dr. Falta, Dr. Jindal, Dr. Guy's daughter and George. (L-R sitting) Dr. Doyle, Dr. Stephen Guy and Dr. Womble



Rory Hamilton

## Walter Reed Army Medical Centre Team Excels Again

"My dad was vomiting all the time. Then his feet became swollen and he started getting back pain. My dad was speechless as he discovered he was this ill. He knew his life was in jeopardy. Next, he could not work. We had to get someone else to drive the truck. All our money was used in getting him treatment but his condition never really improved.

"He was getting weaker and weaker, losing weight and unable to do anything. As a praying family we continued praying to God for a miracle. And when I heard Mr. Subraj was looking into my dad's case I knew he was the miracle we were praying for," said Racquel.

"I read about Mr. Subraj earlier in the papers and when we eventually met him a warm feeling

came over me. Somehow our family felt confident again. The way Mr. Subraj speaks you can feel his sincerity and his caring nature. He made our problems his. This meeting was since in January of this year and we knew that there was hope," said the donor.

"Today it's five days after the surgery," said Racquel and having donated one of her kidneys to her dad she insists that she has no regrets. "I feel proud that I can do this for my dad. I had pain immediately after surgery but now I am fine. My dad will be discharged tomorrow and he is also ex-

pected to make a full recovery. I spoke with him before I left the hospital and he is

scared during pre-surgery rehearsals, Racquel said, "there was some fear initially

my courage and we were made to feel that this was all routine. Words cannot express our gratitude," concluded Racquel speaking from her home.

George Subraj, once again funded the entire trip of both the medical and administrative teams. He was heartened that the Ministry of Health has promised to provide the medication for the patients again and that the Dr. Balwant Singh Hospital has agreed to subsidize the cost associated with the usage of their facilities.

While in Guyana and virtually living at the hospital monitoring the patients Mr. George and his colleagues Lake Persaud, Jas Persaud and Nate Tirbeni met with other patients with similar condition. Remarkably a former Army Lieutenant, Mr. Winston George, who had a similar transplantation almost two years ago dedicates a lot of his time meeting and counseling patients suffering from End Stage Renal Failure. He is an able-bodied resource person who works along with the medical team and the patients alike. "He is an invaluable part of the pre and post surgery process," said Mr. Roberio.

While in Guyana and

but then Mr. Subraj and the doctors were always there comforting us and building our confidence. They built

very happy. I think he is going to be driving his truck again."

When asked if she was



George and the Hamiltons: Rory is seated and Racquel is second from left.

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## George Subraj Makes Guyana's National Honors List

### With Medal Of Service

While making preparations to return to New York two Sundays ago after working around the clock at Dr. Balwant Singh's Hospital with a team of doctors to complete two kidney transplantation surgeries, the Government of Guyana for the first time in nine years, released their list of National Awardees, and Mr. George Subraj, President Of Zara Realty Holding Corp, was among the recipients of the Medal of Service (MS).

George Subraj, who pioneered Guyana's First Kidney Transplant Surgery in July, 2008, went on to introduce Pediatric Heart Surgery last April; also at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC) in association with the Caribbean Heart Institute (CHI); Dr. Gary Stephens and North Shore Long Island Jewish Medical Centre.

A team headed by Dr. Rahul Jindal and Dr. Edward Falta, from the Walter Reed Army Medical Centre, undertook the 8-hour long kidney transplant.



George Subraj

stitutions would fill volumes.

When asked how he felt being recognized by his peers for his outstanding humanitarian work George said: 'It gives one a warm feeling to be given an award. But I must say that whenever my brothers and our family; our children and I work, we do not do so for any reward. We are driven by the simple mantra of 'good giving is divine' and this is motivation enough.

"I would however like to thank those who think of me

being worthy of this award and to express my heartfelt appreciation; and also to add that our work is not yet done. I would also like to say that this award is for the poor and sick of Guyana. They say charity begins at home and I would like to see more people coming forward to help the needy. My brothers and I, our families also, will continue to help," said the donor of the Computer Training Centre at the Saraswatie Vidya Niketan Secondary School, WCD, Guyana.

Upon receiving this news, George also received a letter from one of the patients whose life was saved in a seven-hour long Kidney Transplantation Surgery funded by the Zara boss, last April.

The patient was Gopinath Rampersaud and the letter reads in part:

Dear Mr. Subraj, One can pay back the loan of gold, but one dies

forever in debt to those who are kind. (Malayan Proverb)

It is with deepest gratitude and humility that I write to you regarding your immense kindness and generosity which significantly impacted my life and that of my family.

Your whole hearted response to my need for medical care ensured that I received the best possible attention, surpassing my expectation. Even after my operation you continued to support me providing medication which is critical to my well being.

I truly believe that there is something very unique and special about you and the depth of care and humanity that you have demonstrated in funding the cost of my medical care complete with the provision of expert practitioners, who

were flown in from overseas to attend to me in my time of need.

I shall forever be in your debt and it is my fervent wish that these words convey the depth of feeling that my family and I have when we think of your extraordinary deed and how this has improved our lives and has kept me alive.

Our Prayer is that you will continue to receive every blessing, always.

Sincerely, Gopinath Rampersaud.

Heartiest Congratulations on your National Award, Mr. George Subraj!!!