

Of Being a gift

The self-effacing achiever extraordinaire in the field of engineering, a product of IIT Kharagpur, this Rotarian lives every minute of his life in the true spirit of Rotary, enhancing the standing his vocation, contributing his treasure, time and talent to service of the needy. This is not corporate philanthropy, it is his personal contribution. In this month of giving, we could have thought of any one but our own incredible, exceptional, peerless benefactor Past President O.P. Khanna.



Let's hear of him on his Moment of Transformation and what transformation -

With over 50 years of distinguished work career, I had also got the opportunity to work for a UN assignment in Uganda to set up a Defence Unit for reclaiming hundreds of Defence Vehicles, lying idle- a job I relished. After 3 years of completion, I came to Bangalore for a four weeks holiday. Two significant incidents took place almost same day:

I was invited as a chief guest by Manipal Heart Foundation on their annual day. In my talk I dwelt on the social responsibilities of major hospitals in India like MH. While one could rejoice that India boasts of world class medical care, while 95 % of the people who could ill afford to bear the high rates that most hospitals particularly for major treatment like Heart Surgery.

It seemed the talk was well received, many doctors came to me shared their views. Though they were keen to do free treatment or surgery for the needy, most patients thought that there was a catch in it and shied away from them. They proposed if a Corporate man like me took the initiative to form an NGO towards this objective, they would join hands.

At that time I took the proposal with a pinch of salt. It would mean for me leaving a lucrative job of over US \$ 15000/ month and instead give my whole time and perhaps my own money for service.

The same evening, there was a family reunion dinner, my son and daughter were also there. At the dinner, they suggested " You have worked very hard all your life. We are now fairly well settled in our professions, We do not need nor we expect any money from your earnings. There is no need for you to work anymore for money."

The thought that had emerged at MH in the morning discussions with the doctors raised its head again. I shared with the family what had transpired in the morning.

Well, a time comes in the life of every person when he or she thinks your beliefs/values are more important than material world around. This was such a moment in my life. Two thoughts came on the top of my mind: Whatever material value we create, we go empty handed from this world –without exception .

One's life partner's decision is important in such

matters. I asked my wife Prabha her opinion. She too seemed to take sides with the children. It was that moment that I more in my life and instead dedicate all my life in the service of the needy of our society.

I went back –submitted my papers, came back after 3 months to be a part of an initiative that I along with the group of doctors started and which has grown from year to year.

That initiative was Needy Heart Foundation (NHF)—an NGO started to facilitate heart surgery of needy poor of the society. Renowned doctors like Dr Joseph Xavier- head Fortis cardiac Surgery, Dr Devanand Head of Manipal cardiac Surgery, renowned Cardiologist Dr Manjunath Director JH, Dr Subash Chandra and a few professionals from the non medical world are a part of this NGO.

His Contribution

Since 2002, the amount transferred by the 14 organizations, on whose boards he sits, to NHF / Rotary is about US \$ 280,000 (Rs. 1,68,000,00)

He has channelized most of his money for Heart Surgery to "The Rotary Foundation" through the following donations:

- ❖ Three Rotary Endowments of US\$ 25,000 each i.e. US \$ 75,000.
- ❖ A matching Grant in 2007-8 for establishing a Rotary Homograft Bank- then second in the country, about Rs. 10,000,00
- ❖ 5 Matching / Global Grants for Heart Surgery of poor, needy heart patients over the years
- ❖ Term Gift of Rs. 60,000,00 (Rs.60 lacs) to establish a Cardiac Rehabilitation Centre. An additional Term gift of Rs. 40,000,00 (Rs.40 lacs) is under way
- ❖ In this period of about 14 years, NHF has signed MOUs with nine of the top world class Cardiac Hospitals in India - Manipal, Fortis, Jayadeva, Columbia Asia, Ramaiah, Narayana Hryudayalaya, Bhagwan Mahaveer Jain and Sagar Hospitals to facilitate surgeries at highly subsidized rates – at almost a third of the normal rates.
- ❖ NHF has saved over 6000 lives and touched the lives of over a million people by conducting Cardiac awareness camps amongst the masses - primarily in rural areas. NHF has facilitated heart surgeries of over 120 poor patients from neighbouring and under developed countries like Pakistan, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Uganda, Mauritius etc - thus spreading international goodwill & understanding and building bridges of friendship across borders.

"I can say with confidence that the happiness and contentment that I have now compensates much more than what I might have lost by way of money. Biggest benefit that I got from this association is that at even 77+ years, I am still having an 18 hours day out of which almost 10/12 hours go for this cause-Sundays included.

Let me humbly admit that I do not think I would have undergone this transformation if I was not a Rotarian"