

The Virgin Islands Consortium

SDA Organization Donates \$3,500 To JFL's Neonatal Unit

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The Community Services Federation of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church on Thursday presented a check in the amount of \$3,500 to the Gov. Juan F. Luis Hospital and Medical Center to benefit the hospital's Neonatal Unit.

Luis Hospital VP of Clinical Services/Chief Nursing Officer Justa Encarnacion accepted the donation on behalf of hospital CEO Dr. Kendall Griffith and thanked church members for their support.

"I, on behalf of our CEO Dr. Kendall Griffith and the entire hospital staff, would like to thank the Seventh-Day Adventist Church for considering JFL, and in particular the

Neonatal Unit, as a benefactor in its efforts to provide valuable services to the community," Encarnacion said.

In presenting the check, Pastor Henry Peters, director of community services, said his organization has been "blessed" by Juan Luis Hospital.

"We have been blessed with the services of this institution and we just wish to let you know how appreciative we are for your dedication," he said.

Peters went on to say that the organization decided to donate the funds after learning of the "burden" one of its members, Gertrude Roberts, had for the Neonatal Unit.

When asked why she desired to donate to the unit, Roberts said, "We are loving people and we love to care for everyone, but this year, we decide that we want to care for the younger ones."

She went on to explain that every year the Federation conducts "community service by helping the senior citizens and other people, but this year we decide that we want to reach out to the community to help the younger ones, so we decide whatever we have, we would give it to the hospital."

However, Peters pointed out that the SDA Community Services Federation secures its funding largely through "the sacrificial giving of the members of the church." He said that while some of the funds that went into Thursday's donation were raised at the Federation's annual Mother's Day Banquet, the organization does not typically secure funding that way. Monies collected at the banquet were then supplemented by charitable donations from church members.

Faye John Baptiste, JFL's nurse manager in the neonatal unit, said after receiving prior input from hospital staff, much of the donated funds will be used to purchase infant car seats for needy families.

"Sometimes parents present with a newborn and there's no car seat, and [the infant] has to be in a car seat," she said.

In addition, John Baptiste said the hospital has identified some "long-term capital equipment that we can use in the neonatal intensive care unit, including chairs for kangaroo care, as well as some new bassinets for the newborns."

When asked how soon the money will be put to use, John Baptiste jokingly said, "I'll start shopping today."

On average, JFL's Neonatal Unit serves 500-700 infants per year.