

The Virgin Islands Consortium

CFVI Awards \$190,000 Grant To Juan Luis Hospital For Life-Saving Equipment At Neonatal Unit

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ST. CROIX -- The Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands (C.F.V.I.) on Wednesday presented grant funds to the Juan F. Luis Hospital and Medical Center (J.F.L.) for the purchase of two Panda Warmers, two Giraffe Omnibeds, a Symphony Rechargeable Breast Pump and Trolley, and a Transcutaneous Bilirubinometer for monitoring Jaundice for babies in the hospital's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (N.I.C.U.)

The grant totaled approximately \$197,000 and was disbursed from C.F.V.I.'s hurricane recovery fund that was set up with the hospital so donors who want to offer financial support can donate through them, with 100 percent of the donations funneled to the hospital to use as it sees fit. The fund was originally established in 2012.

Faye John-Baptiste, nurse manager at the N.I.C.U., who has served in the unit for 26 years, gave an excellent presentation about the value and unique features of the purchased equipment. According to a handout distributed at the event, after observing use of the Giraffe Omni and Panda beds for critical care during a visit to the Baptist Hospital and Miami Children's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, Mrs. John-Baptiste spurned a deep desire for the premature babies in St. Croix to have access to the same live-saving care.



The handout noted that the Virgin Islands infant mortality rate was one of the highest in the United States at 12-15 percent. Many newborns were transferred from the island for intensive care, but the results were devastating, Mrs. John-Baptiste said, in that many of the transferred infants died. She did note, however, that of the 400-500 babies born at J.F.L. in 2018, only 10 percent were in N.I.C.U., while the U.S. figure was at 15 percent. There has been vast improvement, she added, as only comfort care was provided in the past, while now more intricate, precise care is being administered.

Ms. John-Baptiste eagerly demonstrated the features of the Giraffe Omni bed. It is patient-driven and offers total care and support for the smallest babies. It allows for minimal transfer to the baby, has a built-in scale, doubles as a warmer bed, notifies the specific amount of heat needed, has a lazy Susan mattress, manipulates and turns baby without lifting, is height adjustable and can accommodate twins. The Panda bed is less complicated and used for transitional care. It also has a built-in scale, built-in suction and oxygen, and is height adjustable.

The noninvasive Transcutaneous Bilirubinometer is used for monitoring Jaundice in the smallest patients. It is placed on the baby's forehead to measure the jaundice level and determine the best care needed.

A hospital grade breast pump and other supplies supporting breastfeeding were purchased as well.



Valarie Lee, chief nurse officer, who joined the J.F.L. staff in January, said that at her last job placement the number of hospital options in the city was vast, but on St. Croix when you hear an ambulance's sirens, you know the only place it is headed is to J.F.L. She expressed amazement at the community support the hospital receives and is grateful for the trust placed in them. She said that C.F.V.I.'s donation and support is mind-boggling and much appreciated.

Dee Baecher-Brown, C.F.V.I. president, said that she, her associate director of grants and programs Anna Wheatley-Scarbrielle, and the entire C.F.V.I. staff are committed to supporting J.F.L. for the long haul.

Since Hurricanes Irma and Maria, over \$12 Million dollars have been donated to C.F.V.I. territory-wide, with \$3 million dollars specifically directed to St. Croix. Mrs. Baecher-Brown spoke highly of C.F.V.I.'s relationship with J.F.L., remarking, "J.F.L. Hospital and Medical Center has been one of the C.F.V.I.'s most important partners. The community cannot be successful if they are not successful. The staff and leadership always say 'Yes' with open arms to enhance the services they deliver. They go above and beyond. They are one of the most important element for quality of life in St. Croix."



Mrs. Baecher-Brown also praised Mrs. John-Baptiste, stating, “Faye never says ‘No.’ In conjunction with the Department of Health and Maternal Child Services, she wrote the proposals to acquire the Baby Boxes. Baby Boxes are a crib concept complete with mattress and filled with other supplies for baby and parents. The process to attain them began before Hurricanes Irma and Maria hit. It was a huge undertaking.”

Additionally, Mrs. John-Baptiste’s commitment to the newborns she cares for has inspired her to conduct a drive to raise \$800 for two warmers, which are developmental covers that are essential for a 29-week-old baby that needs to be in a darkened environment with no sound or light.

The J.F.L. Hospital’s N.I.C.U. staff and C.F.V.I. representatives were ecstatic about the new equipment that will help to facilitate the goal to do better, save more lives, and keep families together while babies are treated with the utmost care. Shenel Moorehead, J.F.L. acting chief financial officer, and Dyma Williams, acting chief executive officer, who also has a N.I.C.U. background, joined in the celebration as well. They all expressed passion for what they do along with profound gratitude to C.F.V.I. for their contribution. The N.I.C.U. is now best equipped to retain patients, offer family-centered care and give patients a better chance for a positive outcome.