Highlights

- Ward E1 gets a royal touch
- Patients get extra dose of smiles
I joined RCWMCH in May 2010 but it feels as if I have known the institution and its people for years. I want to express my sincere gratitude for the warm welcome I received from everyone here - a special thank you to Prof Heather Zar who went out of her way to arrange a welcome party for me to meet all the clinicians.

I also want to acknowledge the building blocks in place and the legacy left by my predecessor, Dr Dimitri Erasmus, to ensure that RCWMCH maintains its standard as the leading specialised healthcare provider for the children in Africa. Mine is to pick up where he left off.

My first five months here have been exciting, busy and challenging with lots of events. I had to learn the new environment, meet new people and learn the culture of the organisation whilst at the same time making sure that I get on with my job.

During the month of June our children and parents were honoured to be visited by the Royals, Prince William and Harry, in support of the public launch of the Children’s Hospital Trust’s fundraising campaign for the establishment of the Surgical Skills Training Centre.

During the six weeks of the World Cup period (June and July), which was co-incidentally a school holiday, we experienced a surge in children’s injuries (not related to the World Cup) and hence our theatres were quite busy.

In August we had our annual Smile Week, which was dedicated to operating on children with cleft palates. The Smile Foundation provided the funding for all the consumables and additional staff for the operations. This year the operations included hand surgery patients, and surgery for 10-year-old Hamza, whose operation lasted for about 10 hours to reconstruct his face.

In all 24 operations were completed in that week - a big thank you to the Smile Foundation Team and the Vodacom Foundation.

We’ve also had to bid farewell to two staff members. Keith Johnson, the assistant director of finance, left a hole in our hearts after he passed away in August and Professor Louis Reynolds has decided to swap his stethoscope to take a stronger hand in activism. Both worked for the hospital for many, many years and have left their mark at this institution.

As we say goodbye to the last quarter we also welcome Spring and the new quarter with open arms and open minds.

Thank you for your dedication and commitment that you have displayed to the children at this institution during the national public service strike.
This year’s annual Smile Week, which took place from August 2 until August 6, was a huge success, with 24 children undergoing cleft lip and palate, cranio-facial and hand surgeries - nine more than last year.

Smile Week, an initiative by the Smile Foundation, is an annual event which takes place at hospitals around the country. Last year RCWMCH partnered with the Smile Foundation for the first time.

The Smile Foundation also celebrated its 10th anniversary this year.

One of the patients to undergo cranio-facial surgery was nine-year-old Hamza. The long-time ward E1 patient underwent about eight hours of surgery to lift the bones in his face. Hamza’s jawbone had been compressing his windpipe and as a result he had been breathing through a tracheotomy since he was two years old.

The aim of the surgery was to help Hamza to breathe without a tracheotomy.

Dr. Anita Parbhoo, Senior Medical Superintendent expressed her sincere appreciation to the Smile Foundation and the Vodacom Foundation for sponsoring these corrective procedures.

“Cleft lip and palate is the most common facial congenital anomaly in children.

“This deformity affects the patients in many negative ways and needs long-term specialist treatment.

“The operation remedies the condition, and a multidisciplinary approach, which includes health care professionals, will continue post-operatively at the Hospital, contributing to the best outcome for the child.

“We are thankful to the Smile Foundation for including the congenital hands cases in this year’s smile week.”
Highlights

Princes William and Harry visit Ward E2

On Friday 18 June 2010 Prince William and Prince Harry visited the Red Cross War Memorial Children’s Hospital to spend time with patients and their caregivers in Ward E2 and to announce the Public Launch of the Children’s Hospital Trust’s fundraising campaign to develop a Surgical Skills Training Centre.

The Princes met Colin Eglin, a WW2 war veteran who donated part of his salary to help build the Hospital and interacted with the children and the staff.
Prof Reynolds bids farewell after 38 years

Professor Louis Reynolds retired at the end of August after working at RCWMCH for 38 years. In a motivation to the South African Medical Association for an award Professor Heather Zar had this to say about the doctor, activist and photographer...

Professor Louis Reynolds has devoted his career to championing the cause of equity in the delivery of medical and healthcare services for South African children, especially children who are poor, marginalised or disadvantaged.

For almost 40 years, Prof Reynolds has worked at Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital (RCWMCH) and at the University of Cape Town (UCT), serving children in the public sector and speaking out as an advocate for better health for children in South Africa and for child rights.

Prof Reynolds has consistently served as the conscience of the Faculty of Health Sciences at UCT, serving on the Research Ethics Committee and the Faculty Board. He was amongst the few to speak out against discrimination and separate health facilities prior to democracy. He worked to transform RCWMCH, contributing to the establishment of the first racially integrated paediatric intensive care unit at a time when there was much segregation. He devoted much of his extra mural time to civil society activism for human rights, socio-economic justice and peace within the broad anti-apartheid struggle.

He was a member of the End Conscription campaign until its 1988 banning. He was a founding member of the National Progressive Primary Health Care Network (NPPHCN) in 1987, serving on the National Executive Committee for several years. He actively supported community-based health projects affiliated to NPPHCN such as the Philani Nutrition Project, SACLA and others through regular workshops and direct support for Community Health Worker training. He helped organise the landmark 1992 NPPHCN-SAHSO Broederstroom Health Policy Conference, and served on the organising committee of the 1997 International Conference on Health and the New World Order: Lighten the burden of Third World Health (also co-editing conference proceedings). He was detained in 1986 while providing measles immunisation to children displaced by “Witdoek” violence in KTC during covert apartheid security force operations, and arrested in 1989 while leading a SHAWCO-NPPHCN first-aid team at “The Purple Shall Govern” protest.

Prof Reynolds continues to be a leading advocate for child health and child rights nationally. He speaks out on the social determinants of health in the context of the South African Constitution, pointing out that inadequate implementation of socioeconomic rights harms child health. This is captured in the recent Provincial Government of the Western Cape (PGWC) report on the Burden of Disease in Children which he co-authored. He also initiated a priority setting process for the PGWC. When xenophobia struck Cape Town he was one of the first to visit refugee camps to monitor and report on the health of the refugee children. He is a founding member of the South African chapter of the People’s Health Movement, a global movement for health as a fundamental human right.

As Director of Advocacy within the Department of Paediatrics and Child Health at UCT, he leads initiatives to address inequities in child health, socio-economic disparities and child rights. He teaches on health and human rights in the School of Public Health.

As an individual, he exemplifies these values daily. His work involved caring for the most marginalised children from all backgrounds. He provided a role model for treating vulnerable children and mothers with respect and gentleness, always protecting their dignity and independence. He has served the children of South Africa for nearly 40 years with honesty, integrity, humility and a strong commitment to justice, equity and transformation.
Twenty-four staff members completed an Occupational Health and Safety Course at the end of July. For more information about this course, the Fire Marshall Training Course and the First Aid Course contact Eugene Furter on ext 5477.

Radiology staff started a blanket knitting drive. The department got a cash donation which they used to buy wool. They knitted the wool into squares and sewed together nine blankets which were donated to the Sarah Fox Children’s Home. Here, with the finished products are, from left, Joy Gowan, Yolande Adams, Teresa September, Jessica Bertelsman, Zubeida Kariem, Zelda Mannqina, Gafsa Kamedien and Clarissa Oliphant.

On Wednesday July 7 and Thursday July 8 the health spotlight focused on staff. The Occupational Health and Safety and Quality Assurance divisions of the hospital organised two staff wellness days for Wellness Week. Staff were presented with medical aid presentations and could have their blood pressure screened, glucose tested, cholesterol screened and have their weight, height and waist circumference measured or get massages. Confidential HIV testing and counselling was also available. Here Cornelius Korasi of GEMS tests Abdul Wagie’s cholesterol while Shireen Michaels tests Gabriel Valentine’s blood pressure.
Information update

Staff Health Clinic offers a range of services

The Staff Health Clinic, on the ground floor of the nurses’ home, offers RCWMCH staff the convenience of health services on their doorstep.

The clinic, which is run by Sister Kuku Ponono and Engela Anderson, provides a wide range of services and these services are expanding continually.

Sr Ponono says that later in the year the clinic will offer on-going voluntary HIV counselling and testing. Currently this is only provided a few times a year, during wellness day drives.

Other services at the clinic include:
- family planning
- pap smears
- advice on sterilisation
- TB and general counselling
- Immunisation for flu and hepatitis
- Advice on the ICAS programme
- Reiki
- Blood pressure, sugar and haemoglobin screenings on request - which are followed up with a doctors’ referral if necessary.

The clinic is open every weekday from 7am to 4pm.

For more information contact Sr Ponono or Engela on exts 5283, 5410 or 5281.

Special events

Crossed and crazily dressed Casual Day colleagues

Staff in the admin block took the “funny dress” theme to heart on Casual Day, September 3, this year when several spontaneous staff members raided a colleague’s cupboard for clothes. Others came to work in pyjamas or pretended to be clowns for the day. Casual Day is an annual, national event to raise funds for people with disabilities.
My name is Fundiswa Phillips, married Mdini. I hail from the Northern Cape Province, a small town called Prieska. I am a social worker by profession and have been in practice for more than 10 years.

My career started in the Western Cape at an NGO. I then moved back home to work for Social services, after which I moved to Correctional services in Calvinia.

I moved to Cape Town in 2006 to work at Chrysalis Academy where I developed and implemented the family integration programme.

I ended my service at Chrysalis Academy as Acting Programmes Manager for a year.

I assumed employment at the Friends in March 2010, as the Director.

The Friends have a new director

The Children’s Hospital Trust has launched a brand new Facebook fan page.

- To share news and exciting events linked to the Red Cross War

Memorial Children’s Hospital:

- visit www.facebook.com/childrenshospitaltrust
- Become a fan and check it out!