

Heart To Heart Trust Fund: Saving Lives for a Decade

As the Heart To Heart Trust Fund celebrates a decade of transforming lives, it remains a testament to the power of community, compassion, and unwavering dedication.

Words Jennifer Paldano Goonewardane.



Dr. Rajitha Y De Silva and team during Abhayadanaya initiative.

The Heart to Heart Trust Fund celebrates its tenth anniversary in December 2024. This journey began on January 1, 2015, when a team of dedicated doctors and nurses, led by the renowned cardiothoracic surgeon Dr. Rajitha Y. de Silva, performed a groundbreaking keyhole cardiac surgery. This milestone began an initiative born from Dr. de Silva’s compassion and determination.

As a young surgeon at the Colombo National Hospital, Dr. Rajitha de Silva was deeply moved by the plight of patients in dire need of heart surgery, forced to endure lengthy waiting lists due to insufficient facilities in the public healthcare system. The imbalance between demand and supply meant that even those requiring urgent surgery encountered insurmountable delays frequently. Many, unable to afford private treatment, tragically never made it to the operating table.

Dr. de Silva’s concern followed him to the semi-government Sri Jayewardenepura General Hospital (SJGH), where he saw firsthand how even partial support from the President’s Fund was insufficient for many patients to afford life-saving heart

surgeries. Witnessing these heartbreaking situations, Dr. de Silva envisioned a trust fund to assist patients needing cardiac procedures.



A donation received from a well-wisher.



Trust Fund donates essential items to the Cardiothoracic theater NHSL.

He shared his vision with his mentor, cardiologist Dr. Ruvan Ekanayaka. With the unwavering support of the hospital staff and management, they poured their hearts into making this vision a reality. Thus, the Heart to Heart Trust Fund was born in December 1, 2014, soon attracting donors eager to support its mission. Since then, the Trust Fund has been a beacon of hope, tirelessly working to bridge the gap between life and death for countless heart patients, ensuring that financial constraints do not hinder life-saving surgery.

A decade after its inception, the Heart to Heart Trust Fund has made remarkable strides, disbursing 95 million rupees to assist 675 patients with heart-related procedures. This monumental achievement began as a mere idea. Thanks to the efforts of dedicated lawyers and volunteers who gave their services and time freely to make the initiative a reality, it evolved into a registered legal entity, a charitable trust. Governed by a board of trustees of distinguished Sri Lankans from diverse

professions, the Trust Fund ensures transparent and judicious decision-making.

Dr. de Silva's vision for a board of trustees stemmed from his commitment to transparency, given the Fund's reliance on public donations. Thus, the Heart to Heart Trust Fund, incorporated by Act of Parliament No. 10 of 2024, is a Trust co-founded by Dr. Ruvan Ekanayaka (Senior Consultant Cardiologist) and Dr. Rajitha Y. De Silva (Consultant Cardiothoracic Surgeon).

The Trust is guided by a group of eminent individuals who serve as its Board of Trustees and dedicated volunteers who support the noble cause with the objective that "No one in our country should die or suffer from heart disease due to lack of finances". The Heart to Heart Trust Fund's journey has been miraculous, inspiring generous contributions from many.

One of the Fund's unique and compelling initiatives is the concept of Abhayadanaya or the "gift of life." This ingenious idea by Dr. de Silva encourages the public to mark special occasions—such as birthdays, anniversaries, or in memory of deceased loved ones—by donating to someone in need of heart surgery. This act of kindness saves lives and allows the donors to accrue merit for the intended individual. Over the past ten years, this concept has gained immense popularity, with countless individuals sharing their milestones and celebrating their loved ones with a donation to give life to a person who needs it dearly. Hence, the Trust Fund focuses on saving the lives of breadwinners whose disease impacts families and their fortunes, compounding their plight further as they grapple with financial loss due to the illness and the challenge of finding money for surgery.

Several remarkable donations and initiatives have fueled the growth of the Heart to Heart Trust Fund. In 2018, the Sri Lanka Air Force contributed one million rupees, while the Navy donated five million. The Sri Lanka Army made a powerful appeal to its personnel, urging them to donate a day's pay to the Trust Fund. This collective effort raised an impressive 10.5 million rupees.

A heartwarming surprise came from the family of Mauri Sendapperuma, a Sri Lankan-born woman living in Australia. In her will, she left thirteen million rupees to the Heart To Heart Trust Fund. This unexpected gift highlighted the Fund's growing reputation beyond Sri Lankan shores, underscoring the profound impact of its life-saving work.

In 2022, the students of Musaeus College Colombo demonstrated their commitment

through the “Till Collection” initiative. Every student received a till to voluntarily collect donations, big or small, for the Heart to Heart Trust Fund. Their collective efforts amassed a staggering 13.5 million rupees.

These notable contributions showcase the widespread support and admiration for the Trust Fund’s noble mission. Deeply moved by this initiative, Sri Lankans at home and abroad contribute generously, demonstrating their overwhelming approval and support for this life-saving cause. From businesses large and small to individuals of various faiths and ethnicities, the generosity of many has been instrumental in the Fund’s success, proving that compassion knows no boundaries.



Dr Rajitha Y De Silva, Consultant
Cardiothoracic Surgeon, Sri Jayewardenepura General Hospital, Co-Founder, Heart to Heart Trust Fund.



Dr. Ruvan Ekanayaka, Senior Consultant
Cardiologist, Co-Founder, Heart to Heart Trust Fund.



Donation of masks.



Dr Ruvan Ekanayaka and Dr. Rajitha Y De Silva, Co-Founders, Heart To Heart Trust Fund receive a donation from Sri Lanka Army.

The Heart to Heart Trust Fund operates out of an office at the Sri Jayewardenepura Hospital, with volunteers serving as its lifeblood. These dedicated individuals handle fund disbursement, follow-ups, record-keeping, and fundraising, driving the Trust Fund’s growth. Many volunteers are former patients of Dr. de Silva or those who have experienced the urgency of heart-related surgeries, giving them a profound understanding of the mission.

The volunteers have organized popular sing-along evenings to increase visibility and raise funds, attracting enthusiastic participation and business support. In 2023, the annual sing-along event featured the launch of the song “Hadata Hadak,” performed by renowned vocalist Deepika Priyadharshini, with lyrics by Buddhadasa Galappatty and music by Mahinda Bandara, all of whom volunteered their talents

for the cause. This event also saw the Trust Fund’s official website launch, facilitating online donations and marking a significant milestone in its outreach efforts.

The Trust Fund’s work extends beyond surgeries. It focuses on prevention through awareness programs for school children, adults, and professional organizations. These initiatives promote healthy lifestyles, spreading the Trust Fund’s message and attracting a diverse group of future volunteers and donors.

The Trust Fund celebrated its tenth anniversary at the Sri Jayewardenepura Hospital with an alms-giving ceremony for Buddhist and Christian clergy who had undergone heart surgeries performed by Dr. Rajitha de Silva and Dr. Aruna Kapuruge. This event marked a decade of life-saving work and honored the spiritual leaders who benefited from the Trust Fund’s mission. This unique event will offer alms to these clergy members as a gesture of gratitude for their recovery, after receiving life-saving surgery. The Heart to Heart Trust Fund stands as a testament to the power of compassion, community, and the unwavering dedication of its founders and supporters, transforming countless lives along the way.



Mauri Sendapperuma, a Sri Lankan-born from Australia donated 13 million rupees to

the Trust.



Donation from Sri Lanka Airforce.



Students of Musaeus College Colombo donated 13.5 million rupees through the ‘Till Collection’.



Former President Maithripala Sirisena during the launch of Heart To Heart website.