

Helicopter Ride For Kidney Patients



Enjoying their helicopter ride are Tilone, Cethan and Reece.

The KZN Kidney Association (KZNKA) held its annual Christmas party at the Air Force Base, which is situated at the Durban International Airport last week.

The event was for children who have kidney related disorders. Mary-Ann Smith, a volunteer of the association said that the event is the brainchild of Dr Rajendra Bhimma, a specialist at Chief Albert Luthuli Hospital. He is the professor who keeps our children alive, said Smith.

The event was co-hosted by the Air Force Base. Commander of the Base, Colonel Steven Bekker said that his team is proud to assist the association. We are paid by society and it's good to give back. Hopefully our participation might help to enlighten or help someone, said Bekker.

Sewlall Hemraj, whose son suffers from a kidney disorder said, Our son almost died but thanks to Dr Bhimma he is alive today. Events like this really help to support parents who are under stress. It's really difficult considering the medical and emotional implications. Parents play an important role in maintaining their children's health as we need to ensure that our children eat correctly and at the right times. Parents need to make sure that their children follow their diets accordingly thus ensuring rehabilitation.

Genevieve Miller, a member of the association confirmed Hemraj's statements. She said, It is great when parents get together and socialise. This helps them to realise that they are not the

only ones going through this. Miller further said that the helicopter ride is an adventure of a lifetime for many of the children.

Bhimma and his team have hosted the event for over 11 years. A committee elected by its members runs the organisation on a voluntary basis. Running costs are minimal since they consist of stationery, postages and other out of pocket expenses.

Therefore, hundred percent of the funds, which are donated for a specific project, can be used for that purpose, without the deduction of any overhead costs. During the 25 years that the KZNKA has been serving the community, it has received support from many sources. In South Africa, as in most countries, the national and provincial governments are chronically short of funds to provide a full range of health services to the community. One of the provincial hospitals, which were in every other way qualified and able to undertake renal transplants, found that the shortage of nursing staff combined with a very tight budget, made it impossible to provide already overworked qualified nurses to deal with cadaver donor transplants. The Kidney Association stepped in and offered to pay for qualified nurses from the private sector to come in on these occasions, which means that transplants from such donors have been performed for many years. Donations and sponsorship are vital to achieve the association's goals of helping people living with kidney disease.