

Red Cross upgrade changes the lives of young cancer warriors

The Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital's oncology-haematology unit has undergone an upgrade which will enhance the services of this already world-class facility.



Mikah Saunders and her dad, Deon, in Red Cross Children's Hospital's new haematology-oncology unit.

"The upgrade and expansion provides a safer environment and added comfort and privacy for the 2,000 children admitted and 5,000 outpatient visitors who rely on this service annually", said Professor Alan Davidson, head of the unit.

The unit now includes state-of-the-art ECG monitors, private consulting rooms and isolation areas for vulnerable patients, as well as a counselling room for a social worker. It also includes fully equipped ablution facilities for families, a renovated filing room and a bigger and more comfortable nurses' tea room.

Established in 1967, the hospital's haematology-oncology service is recognised for excellence across the African continent and beyond – with the unit's team having access to cutting edge treatments that are unavailable in many other low-and middle-income countries. The unit boasts a survival rate of 73% which compares favourably to those achieved by better-resourced units in high-income countries.

Provision has been made for a clinical area dedicated to research and the capacity for transplants and cancer research in the vital area of infection control has been expanded.

Mikah's story

Six-year-old Mikah Saunders was admitted to the hospital in April for suspected appendicitis. She was later diagnosed with cancer. "I'm thankful to be with my family. Thank you to the doctors and nurses who help the children get better and to the people who donate to the hospital."

Her mother, Dorienda said the staff and the improved unit impacted their experience at the hospital. "We are so grateful for all of the staff that have been there for us. They've made our visits comfortable, always offer a shoulder to cry on and someone to talk to. Special thanks to everyone that has made G1 the ward it is today."

Donations

Medical services manager, Dr Anita Parbhoo says, “the hospital is extremely grateful to donors who have come on board to fund this much-needed upgrade of the oncology unit. The renovated areas will assist hospital staff to provide family centred care at a time that is very distressing for parents and families of children being treated for cancer. Caring for staff who are caring for these patients is extremely important. The oncology staff now have a wonderful space in which they can have a few minutes of respite during the day”.

The upgrades were made possible thanks to donors who have contributed through the Children's Hospital Trust (CHT). The CHT is a non-profit organisation established in 1994 to raise funds for specific programmes and projects, which help advance child healthcare through the Red Cross Children's Hospital.

“The brave warriors and their families who are fighting this illness call this unit their second home, and together with the staff have become a family. The little patients, their families and staff spend a considerable amount of time in the unit and the upgrade not only provides much-needed space from a clinical point of view, it also provides patients and their families a significant degree of comfort while they are in the unit.”, said CHT CEO, Chantel Cooper.

Read the original story [here](#).

Source: The Children's Hospital Trust

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