



PRESS RELEASE

AFJ Maternal Health/Handheld Ultrasound Initiative

New York, NY January 10, 2023 – The American Friends of Jamaica (AFJ) is spearheading a Maternal Health/Handheld Ultrasound project with the Ministry of Health and Wellness. This project is not only important regarding obstetrics, but also for accident and emergency patients as most hospitals in Jamaica have limited or no access to ultrasound diagnostics onsite. The project is twofold; there is the handheld ultrasound integration in hospitals and a distribution of essential products to pregnant mothers in birthing centers across the island.

The AFJ recognizes the importance of imaging in obstetrics to ensure that women can maintain healthy pregnancies, have healthy deliveries, and minimize potential complications. The integration of ultrasound technology aids diagnosis related to pulmonary and cardiac issues, internal bleeding, and other life threatening emergencies. Designated hospitals will receive the ultrasound devices and there will be an extensive training programme with physicians on how to operate the devices. This transformative technology will improve patient care and enable more efficient and definitive diagnosis.

Ultrasound is a valuable imaging modality that is used increasingly for a variety of diagnostic procedures. While commonly used for obstetrics scans, its use now extends beyond obstetrics into many other facets of medicine. Through recent improvements, ultrasound machines have become more portable, user-friendly and affordable.

Twenty-four Butterfly Handheld Ultrasound Monitors will be presented to eight hospitals; two earmarked for each hospital. The selected hospitals are Victoria Jubilee, Spanish Town, Princess Margaret, St Ann's Bay, Cornwall Regional, May Pen, Mandeville Regional, and Savanna La Mar. These devices will be presented with supporting technology which are 24 iPads. The project extends to the A&E department at six hospitals including Black River Hospital, Kingston Public Hospital and University Hospital of the West Indies. In addition, 100 Snuggle Nests as well as essential items for mothers and babies, including diapers, wipes, and soaps, among other necessities will be presented to teen mothers.

“The AFJ’s commitment to Point of Care Ultrasound reflects our focus on grants of impact. These devices will provide critical diagnostic information cost efficiently for both hospitals and patients, directing the best care decisions and saving lives. We are grateful for all of our partners who brought their expertise and energy to the project to bring this launch to fruition and we are confident that we will produce data for our donors which will provide confidence for an even larger phase 2”, states Wendy Hart, AFJ President.

The AFJ is grateful for the partner relationships that have led the execution of this project: Jacobi Hospital, Butterfly Global Health, Jamaicans Abroad Helping Jamaicans At Home (JAHJAH), Bailey Medical Supplies and Dennis Shipping. This initiative will improve health outcomes, provide quality care, and provide healthcare professionals with more cutting edge tools.

Donors supporting the execution of the Maternal Health/Handheld Ultrasound Initiative are Ralph and Ricky Lauren Family Foundation, Moncure Foundation, Carol and David Morris, Roddy and Nazee Klotz, Mark and Candace Hart, Lorenz Redlefsen, Mary Kelly, Ron Schrager and Wendy Hart, and proceeds from the AFJ New York Gala fundraising.

About the AFJ

The AFJ is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit built on the principles of service and philanthropy. For nearly 40 years, the organization has been rendering assistance in the areas of Education, Healthcare, and Economic Development. The AFJ Grant Cycle begins at the end of each year and grants are disbursed in April of the following year. For information on how to support our mission for Jamaica, email info@theafj.org or visit www.theafj.org.

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