



Vikki Mioduszewski
Medical Writer
Vikki.Mioduszewski@bmcjax.com
Phone: 904.202.5122
Fax: 904.202.4920

News Release

1325 San Marco Boulevard
Suite 601
Jacksonville, Florida 32207
e-baptisthealth.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Children from Afghanistan to Receive Cardiac Care at Wolfson Children's Hospital *Hospital, Pediatric Cardiologist, Cardiovascular Surgeons Donate Services*

Jacksonville, Florida, May 1, 2006 – Demonstrating that care, concern and compassion know no boundaries, American doctors in Jacksonville are providing world-class cardiac care to two boys from Afghanistan with a history of congenital heart defects, at no cost to their families. The heart specialists are part of the University of Florida (UF) Pediatric Cardiovascular Center, a joint program between Wolfson Children's Hospital and UF/Jacksonville.

The children, ages two and eight, arrived in Jacksonville on Thursday, April 27, 2006, accompanied by their fathers and an Afghan interpreter. On Friday, April 28, 2006, the children were evaluated by pediatric cardiologist Jose Etedgui, MD, medical director of the University of Florida Pediatric Cardiovascular Center affiliated with Wolfson Children's Hospital. The two-year-old's surgery is scheduled for Tuesday, May 2, followed by surgery on the eight-year-old the following week. Each surgery is expected to last five to six hours.

Two-year-old Azad Kofi has a single functioning ventricle with pulmonary stenosis, which has led to severely impaired oxygen levels. Eight-year-old Tamim Sarwari suffers from Tetralogy of Fallot, which causes chronic lack of circulation, creating clubbing of his fingers and swelling of his digits. His fingers and lips are blue. Tests that included EKGs, echocardiograms and cardiac catheterization procedures confirmed the diagnoses.

The surgical goal for both boys is to improve their blood oxygen levels, leading to a better quality of life, and extending their life expectancies. Each child was born with severe heart defects, which in the U.S. would have been identified at birth and repaired during infancy.

Their journey to the U.S. is the result of an extraordinary, collaborative effort.

It began with Ronald Renuart, DO, a colonel with the Florida Army National Guard who was called to duty and sent to Afghanistan in October 2005. Renuart wanted to use his medical skills to help serve his country. His mission was to support more than 3,000 troops with Task Force Phoenix whose job was to train the Afghan National Army. He also was

there to offer medical outreach to the local Afghan people, in part to earn goodwill toward the American people and promote the country's newly elected democratic government.

That's where Renuart met the children and their fathers.

"Both children had limited tolerance and were in critical need of heart repair," said Renuart.

Formerly the chief of staff at Baptist Medical Center Beaches in Jacksonville Beach, Renuart wanted to find help for the boys at Wolfson Children's Hospital, which is part of Baptist Health.

Renuart approached Hugh Greene, president and CEO of Baptist Health, who enthusiastically added his support. Expenses for the medical mission will be covered by "Patrons of the Hearts," an endowment which brings children from foreign countries to Jacksonville for cardiac care. "Patrons of the Hearts" is a partnership between Wolfson Children's Hospital, the University of Florida and Fogle Fine Art & Accessories.

Medical and surgical services are being donated by Wolfson Children's Hospital and University of Florida physicians Jose Etedgui, MD, Eric Ceithaml, MD, and Robert Dabal, MD. The University of Florida Pediatric Cardiovascular Center is supported in part by the Florida Department of Health/Children's Medical Services. Dental services are being donated by Stephen Cochran, DMD, of Setzer and Cochran in Jacksonville.

The Afghan Children's Relief Fund paid for flights from Kabul, Afghanistan, to Frankfurt, Germany. Northwest Airlines donated flights from Frankfurt to Jacksonville for the two children, their fathers and an interpreter, who are staying at Ronald McDonald House in Jacksonville for approximately four to five weeks during treatment and recovery.

The typical cost of this level of cardiovascular care is more than \$40,000.

###

Baptist Health is a faith-based, mission-driven system comprised of Baptist Medical Center Downtown and Baptist Heart Hospital; Baptist Medical Center Beaches; Baptist Medical Center Nassau; Baptist Medical Center South; and Wolfson Children's Hospital - Jacksonville's only children's hospital. Baptist Health also includes cardiology and cardiovascular surgery services, a comprehensive cancer center, orthopaedic institute, women's resource center, a full range of psychology and psychiatry services, outpatient facilities and a network of primary care physicians' offices throughout Northeast Florida. Baptist Health is the official healthcare provider for the Jacksonville Jaguars. For more information, visit www.e-baptisthealth.com

The University of Florida Pediatric Cardiovascular Center is a joint venture between Wolfson Children's Hospital in Jacksonville and the University of Florida/Jacksonville. The center includes diagnosis and treatment of infants, children and young adults with congenital and acquired heart disease. For more information on Wolfson Children's Hospital or the UF Pediatric Cardiovascular Center, visit www.wchjax.com.

"Patrons of the Hearts" is an endowment funded by individuals in the greater Jacksonville community, as well as grants from the First Hand Foundation of Cerner Corporation, GE Healthcare, the Deerwood Rotary and other organizations. It was established to bring underprivileged children with complex congenital heart problems from developing countries to Wolfson Children's Hospital for treatment. For more information or to make a donation to help a child, visit www.patronsofthehearts.org or call 904.202.2919.