

The Vellore Christian Medical College Foundation, Inc.

History

The Vellore Christian Medical College Foundation Inc. [formerly the Vellore Christian Medical College Board (USA)] is a U.S. 501(c)3 not-for-profit corporation chartered in the state of New York. It was first organized in the 1950's when ownership of the medical college and hospital at Vellore shifted from American hands to the churches of India. At that time it was decided that an organization would continue to exist in the United States, but only as a supportive agency with no control or ownership interest in the work carried on by CMC Vellore.

Foundation Financial Support for CMC

ASHA grants

From the early 1980s on, the Foundation has accessed a unit of known as the American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA) program (http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/asha/grant.html). Senator Mark Hatfield, one of the rare U.S. politicians with a genuine interest in poor nations, was instrumental in the creation of the program. The goal of the ASHA program is "to assist schools, libraries, and medical centers outside the United States founded or sponsored by U.S. citizens serving as study and demonstration centers for ideas and practices of the United States" and is shaped to the needs of a limited number of institutions in foreign countries that were demonstrably linked to American culture and society. In most years, CMC Vellore has received several hundred thousand dollars from ASHA, with each grant designated for a capital improvement at CMC. The ASHA program requires the existence of a U.S.-based organizational partner, a role that the Vellore CMC Foundation has filled. Reporting and approval requirements of the ASHA program are extensive and require as much as a third of the time of the Foundation Administrator. However, the ASHA program does not allow any of the grant funds to be spent for the expenses of the U.S. organization. Since 1982, the Foundation has been successful in obtaining 19 of 24 grants applied for, for a total of **\$9,751,575.00**.

A comprehensive list of 29 years of ASHA grants is listed in Table 1 below. Three grants continue to be active today with a value of nearly \$1 million for CMC's benefit through the Foundation.

Table 1: Vellore CMC Foundation/CMC USAID-ASHA Grants 1982 - 2011

Fiscal Year	Purpose	Grant Amount
1982	Medical equipment (15 items)	\$500,000.00
1984	Medical equipment (21 items)	\$400,000.00
1985	Medical equipment (32 items)	\$500,000.00
1986	Medical equipment (7 items)	\$450,000.00
1987	Construction new education building	\$700,000.00
1990	Procurement of linear accelerator & other equipment	\$734,500.00
	Procurement of furnishings, fixtures & equipment for USAID-ASHA funded	
1991	education building	\$375,000.00
1993	Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory	\$500,000.00
1994	Integrated Water System	\$600,000.00
1995	Color Doppler, Urological Table, Gamma Camera	\$500,000.00
1996/1997*	Angiography Suite,	\$600,000.00
	Radiotherapy simulator	\$419,000.00
1998	Digital Radiography System (filmless x-ray)	\$500,000.00
1999	Operating Theater Equipment	\$350,000.00
2001	Computer Labs & Equipment	\$310,000.00

2002	Blood bank Management	\$360,000.00
2003	Pneumatic System	\$337,000.00
2004	Basic Sciences Laboratory	\$227,575.00
2005	Brachytherapy HDL Unit	\$278,500.00
2006	Water System	\$400,000.00
2007	College of Nursing Library	\$360,000.00
2010	Computer Equipment	\$350,000.00
2011	Pathology Equipment - Pending \$326,305.00	
	Total	\$9,751,575.00

The Foundation and its donors have provided support for dozens of other projects and purposes at CMC. Perpetually popular causes are nursing scholarships, Person to Person grants for the poor, and Community Health programs including CHAD, RUHSA, and the Ida Scudder Low Cost Effective Care Ward. Other donors have been drawn to the chaplaincy, medical scholarships, and research.

The Vellore CMC Foundation has collected donations and grants on behalf of CMC from a diverse audience of American supporters. Support has been drawn from national church bodies, congregations, the Scudder Association and its members (relatives of Dr. Ida Scudder), CMC alumni and health professionals who have visited CMC. A review of the past twenty years reveals a total financial contribution to CMC and its faculty of \$17.6 million. Of this, \$6.9 million has come in the form of ASHA grants. Adjusted for inflation, the total value to Vellore CMC over the past two decades has a current value of \$22.7 million.

Included in these giving figures are the results of two capital campaigns, one in the late 1990's and the other from 2004 to 2007. The first was devoted primarily to the construction of the Centenary Building, for clinical service to women and children. The second campaign was in support of the new College of Nursing campus.

In addition to these large campaigns, the Foundation has facilitated numerous smaller campaigns including those organized by medical alumni classes. The Foundation has served as a portal for giving by foundations and corporations who in many cases have negotiated specific targeted grants to CMC departments and projects. In recent years these donors have included the Gates Foundation, Bayer, Pfizer, Bristol Myers/Squibb, and an anonymous Boston-area Foundation working in cooperation with Tufts University.

Over the years, many people have contributed to permanent endowments at the Foundation with designated purposes. The Foundation maintains 32 named permanent endowment funds. The most recent addition is the Dr Ezra Joseph Memorial Fund, established in 2009. As of June 30, 2010 the Foundation's restricted endowments were valued at \$1.9 million out of a total net worth for the organization of \$4.7 million.

From time to time, the Foundation assists in establishing endowments held at CMC. Most recently, in 2009, the Foundation helped Mr. and Mrs. Kumar Sankaranarayan to establish a fund in memory of their son, Aditya Kumar, to benefit children being treated for leukemia.

Foundation endowments and reserve funds are managed by the Atlantic Trust, a New York firm, and are invested in a balanced portfolio of equities and fixed income securities. Indian law governing non-profit organizations prohibits CMC from investing funds in equities, so the Foundation provides a useful way for permanent funds held in the long-term interests of CMC to participate in global economic growth via a portfolio of equities.

The books of the Foundation are audited annually by Tait, Weller and Baker, a Philadelphia-based firm with extensive experience in the not-for-profit sector and organizations accessing the ASHA program.

Promoting Advanced Training for CMC Faculty

Over the years, the Vellore CMC Foundation has supported study outside India by Vellore faculty. In the mid-1990's, this support was systematized in the form of the Senior Training Fellowship Program, which today has been augmented by a Junior Training Fellowship Program. The Foundation provides support of \$50,000 to \$60,000 each year to allow six to ten Fellows to visit medical schools, hospitals and labs outside India for periods of one to three months. CMC pays for the plane ticket, and Foundation funds support the ground expenses outside India. Many Fellows still come to U.S. institutions, but other locations include the United Kingdom, Australia, Singapore and Middle Eastern countries. A sampling of STF and JTF recipients follows.

- Dr. A. J. Joseph, Associate Professor, Department of Gastrointestinal Sciences was awarded a senior fellowship to gain advanced techniques in Endoscopic Ultrasound. Dr. Joseph trained with specialists at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, the Medical University of South Carolina and St. Luc Hospital, Montreal, Canada.
- Dr. Elizabeth Joseph, Associate Professor, Department of Radiology was awarded STF and trained at the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston. While in the US, Dr. Joseph provided a presentation on her STF experience for The Vellore CMC Foundation's Annual Meeting in New York City.
- Dr. John A. Jude trained at the Division of Medical Microbiology, Department of Pathology Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, and Baltimore, MD.
- Dr. Anand Zachariah, Vice Principal of CMC was granted Senior Training Fellowship to visit different countries for the purpose of studying various community-based medical education projects.
- Mr. Walter Nixon Jeydeep, Radiographer in the Department of Radiology trained the Cardiovascular MR Unit, Royal Brompton Hospital, London, UK.
- Mrs. Dorathy Devakirubai T, Reader, College of Nursing, trained in improving antenatal clinic practices in relation to nursing in various Australian medical centers.
- Dr. Indira Agarwal, Professor, Department of Child Health Unit II was awarded STF at the Texas Children's Hospital & Baylor College of Medicine.
- Dr. Banumathi Ramakrishna, Professor in the Department of Pathology, was awarded a STF to gain experience in Pathological and molecular diagnosis of childhood liver disease and with liver transplant histopathology. She trained at the Institute of Liver Studies in King's College Hospital, London and the University Hospital and Birmingham Children's Hospital, Birmingham, England.

Facilitating exchanges and communications

The Vellore CMC Foundation office in New York has functioned throughout its life as a facilitator for people going to and coming from Vellore. The office staff is frequently asked questions by medical students interested in elective study at CMC. Staff members are often able to facilitate communications with the correct offices at CMC for these young people.

The Foundation is also a gateway for volunteers from the health professions who wish to donate their knowledge and skills directly to CMC. We assist in contact with appropriate departments and the Directorate office responsible for their housing and maintenance while at CMC.

The Foundation has sponsored at least seven group trips to CMC for Americans since the Centenary celebrations in 2000.

The Foundation office functions as a resource of information and assistance for CMC faculty visiting the United States as Senior Training Fellows or on independently arranged visits. Foundation staff members prepare letters supporting visa applications for many CMC faculty each year.

From time to time, the Foundation sponsors visits to the United States by the Director of CMC and other officers and faculty members. Every opportunity is taken to introduce CMC leaders to alumni and supporters in the United States. During the past year, the Foundation has assisted with multi-stop U.S. visits by Mrs. Beulah Premkumar, nursing professor and Deputy Director for International Relations and Mrs. Rosaline Jayakaran, Dean of the College of Nursing. These visits facilitated contact with nursing alumni and other supporters in Houston, Chicago, Fort Lauderdale, Washington, New York, and Kansas City. In 2009 CMC's Dr. Atanu Jana, Professor and Head of Department of Child Health, was the Directorate's representative to the Foundation's Annual Corporate and fall Board of Directors meetings. The Foundation sponsored a reception for Dr. Jana to highlight his work in Afghanistan, under the auspices of UNICEF and JHPIEGO (a Johns Hopkins affiliate), with a training program for health workers designed to reduce Afghanistan's high Infant Mortality Rate.

The Foundation publishes a newsletter twice a year, which features highlights from CMC and reports of Vellore-related activity in the United States. The newsletter reaches about 6,000 people. Additionally, there are occasional e-bulletins reaching about 2,000 people and a web site with space for many articles and reports.

The Foundation for the past several years has provided technical assistance to the annual meeting of Vellore medical alumni in the U.S. known as the GOTC. The Foundation website has hosted a special page for information and registration purposes.

The Foundation distributes a Video DVD about CMC that was made by a professional Australian group about five years ago and also sells and gives away a variety of books about CMC and its famous faculty members from times past.

The Vellore CMC Foundation today

Times are changing, and the friends of Vellore are changing as well. Not so many years ago, support in the U.S. for CMC was defined primarily by churches and church people who had learned of CMC through presentations on mission. Dr. Ida Scudder herself campaigned among churches for support on many occasions during the first half of the twentieth century. Americans who had served on the faculty at Vellore retired in the United States and became active advocates and fund raisers throughout the land.

All of this has changed significantly in recent years. National Protestant denominations are struggling with declining support and for the most part now lack the capacity to offer significant financial aid to ecumenical institutions such as CMC. Local congregations now tend to define mission in terms of direct engagement by their members as volunteers—meaning that distant locations such as India often are at the bottom of their priority scale. There are no more Americans serving as faculty members at CMC, so there are none to return home as volunteers or advocates for the Foundation.

Even so, CMC continues to benefit from the generosity of hundreds of committed church people and congregational mission committees. These faithful friends are now joined by a growing body of health care professionals who know about CMC because they studied there or have served as visiting lecturers or volunteers. Many American medical researchers have active partnerships with CMC faculty in numerous investigations. The Foundation Board of Directors now reflects these changes in constituency. Physicians and nurses constitute three quarters of the Directors. Thirteen out of sixteen Board of Directors members grew up in India, and eight of those hold degrees from CMC.

The Foundation continues to operate from offices in the Inter-Church Center in New York City. There are two full-time staff, the President and the Administrator. The Foundation has part-time contracts with an accountant and with a former employee who maintains the computers and the web site.

The Foundation is committed to the founding of the Ida S Scudder Memorial Oration. This will be an annual event honoring a person who has contributed to improving global health and welfare, especially in the South. The event will be held in both India and the U.S. and will be used as an opportunity to introduce new constituencies to the work of Dr. Scudder and CMC Vellore. An internationally recognized leader in health work in the poorest nations has agreed to be the first Scudder Memorial Orator and dates are being negotiated.

In recent years, the Foundation has focused on finding ways to support academic excellence at CMC and especially research programs. The Foundation has also encouraged CMC to create a fund development program of its own, reaching out to the growing ranks of the affluent in India itself. The Foundation has supported efforts to find ways to commercially market the inventions of CMC faculty.