

Fiji Times ONLINE

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Death urges her on

Solomoni Biumaiono (Monday, July 15, 2013)

MOTIVATED by the death of her grandmother earlier this year in Fiji, US-based teenager Nivita Sharma has started her own charitable effort to help medical institutions.

The 16-year-old student from Atlanta, Georgia has come up with a grand plan of supplying medical equipment and supplies to various hospitals and health centres in Fiji.

She has brought over the first batch of medical supplies with her parents, who are in Fiji on a one-month assignment with the University of the South Pacific.

These supplies are earmarked to be distributed to the Sigatoka Hospital, the Navua, Cuvu and Lomawai health centres.

Nivita's father, Professor Divesh Sharma, originally hails from Sigatoka Town before he left Fiji to study in New Zealand in 1984.

"In the future I want to expand throughout Fiji. I want to go to Rakiraki, Tavua, Naitasiri and Tailevu and other small towns and villages and the outer islands because those are the places that need the most help," Nivita said.



Sixteen-year-old Nivita Sharma has embarked on her grand plan to get much needed medical supplies to various hospitals and health centres around the country. Picture: SOLOMONI BIUMAIONO

Her efforts started earlier this year after her grandmother, her dad's mother, died in April.

"This trip I decided to help out my home country, my grandmother passed away in March, three months ago and that really motivated me to help out the medical system here.

"So, if only my grandma was here today, maybe other people will feel the way I do to help out hospitals in Fiji," Nivita said.

Her grandmother was a life-long volunteer, helping out at the Sigatoka Hospital apart from helping physically handicapped children, the Red Cross and the Poor Relief Help.

Nivita is also following her grandmother's footsteps and is eagerly awaiting her turn to help other people.

"I want to volunteer because I want to help out my home country and I want to gain some experience overseas because I aspire to be a doctor, so once I become a doctor I want to come here and share my expertise, so I thought I should get an early start," she said.

To honour her grandmother's memory and put her plan into action, the Australian-born girl approached two corporations dealing in medical supplies in the US, MedShare and WellStar.

"Well, in the US they love to donate to other countries so all I have to do is email a few medical corporations.

"There are two in particular that I went to. So I emailed the managers at the two corporations and I told them what I was doing, an individually initiated mission to go to Fiji and they said, 'come in, tell us what you need and we'll give it to you'," Nivita said.

She had to buy and was given \$5000 worth of medical supplies ranging from bandages, gauze, syringes and other small supplies that she could handle, because as yet she does not have a sponsor, to help her pay for the freight charges.

"The number one problem I encountered was baggage because we have to pay a lot of it and what I would like is for Fiji Airways to help us out with the baggage cost because it is for a good cause.

"We can bring a whole container but right now we just brought band aid and gauze but in the future we can bring wheelchairs, hospital beds and baby cots, like bigger things, even machinery for the hospitals," she said.

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