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(Johannesburg) On June 21 2018, The Nelson Mandela Children's Hospital (NMCH) marked another historic moment as it celebrated one year after the admission of its first patients.

Over a thousand children were treated by doctors and medical staff at the state of the art facility over the year, a milestone which coincides with the Nelson Mandela Centenary celebrations.

The 200-bed facility, a legacy project of Nelson Mandela, serves as a specialist referral paediatric healthcare facility and the second children's hospital in Southern Africa.

Today, On June 28 2018, NMCH held a public event to commemorate this event at the hospital premises in Parktown, Johannesburg.

Since opening, NMCH has phased in centres of excellence including Neonatal and Paediatric Intensive Care Units (the largest in the country), Cardiology, Renal, Radiology, Surgical and Pharmaceutical services. This forms part of the hospital's strategic approach to adequately meeting tertiary medical needs and quality services for children.

While primary healthcare has made a significant difference in improving health services for children in South Africa, NMCH is closing the needs gap for critical paediatric tertiary care in the country and the Southern African region.

Mrs Graca Machel, chairperson of the Nelson Mandela Children's Hospital Trust (The Trust), the mandated custodian of the hospital, said, "Those who have really trusted the dream have built a dedicated children's hospital for the first time in free South Africa. This is a project that came with ambition as this is something that has never been done for our children and our continent. As we walk the journey, we realise that this is an emotional investment that is not measurable but is valuable. We are honouring the pledge that we made."

Through the awarding of bursaries and training of paediatric nurses and doctors the hospital continues to promote academic advancements and skills in child healthcare. This has been realised through partnerships with academic institutions and international partners.

In line with the Sustainable Development Goals which aim to promote access to healthcare for children and to reduce mortality rates for children under the age of five, the hospital is driven by an ethos of universal care and a vision of giving every child a chance to live and thrive.

CEO of the Trust, Sibongile Mkhabela said, "It is easy to focus on today and not how we invest in the future of our children. The vision of this hospital will reveal itself in the fullness of time



and calls on all sectors of society to start reimagining our continent. Therefore, we need to take a long-term perspective about the decisions that we take today. We have to think about the kind of institutions we are building post 1994 and the legacy we will leave behind.”

On December 2, 2016, the Trust celebrated the completion of the hospital's construction which was followed by finalising clinical protocols and programmes, staff training and induction, implementing business processes and evaluating safety and readiness before the treatment of patients.

The hospital CEO, Dr Mandisa Maholwana was appointed the hospital on July 1, 2017 and has led the operations of the institution for the past year including fundraising efforts to ensure its sustainability. “We are pleased with the strides that we have made over the last year and are confident that we will meet our roll-out targets for the year,” said Maholwana. “The feedback we have received from our patients and their families affirms our commitment to compassionate patient care. The journey of fulfilling Madiba’s dream has been challenging but a wholly satisfying one for us as a team and we are pleased to announce that we will be assisting our referral hospital partners by performing 100 general paediatric surgeries this July to honour Madiba.”

To further celebrate the legacy of Madiba, and as part of the Nelson Mandela Centenary Celebrations, NMCH will host an inaugural Golf Day Event at Randpark Golf Club on 18 July 2018.

As part of the celebrations, NMCH further invites corporate South Africa and philanthropists to invest in the future of our children. NMCH therefore challenges 100 private companies to donate a minimum of R1 million each. “Our sustainability model acknowledges the significant role that the private sector can play in promoting the impact of the hospital. If corporate South Africa commits R100 million then we can grow our endowment fund and this would ensure sustainability,” said Mkhabela.

More details on the event are available on www.golfday.nmch.org.za

Issued by the Nelson Mandela Children's Hospital

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