

## Justin Freminot



My Red Cross story started when I was a medical assistant in the Seychelles Army, this was far back in the early 80's. As a medic, I was required to take a First Aid course, which was something quite new in the Seychelles. The British Red Cross was initiating the course here through Mrs. Delome and I had the opportunity to learn First Aid which instantly developed my interest in the area. Through this contact I started meeting people with the same interest and one of the first person I met was, Mr Chrystold Chetty, who revealed his plan about starting a Red Cross society here in the Seychelles. The first meeting took place at Mr Chetty's office, which at the time was located at the Ministry of

Finance, in the company of Mr Norman Lucas, whom was eager as well to proceed with the elementary procedures.

At the same time, the army introduced IHL (International Humanitarian law) training of which I benefited from, followed by blood donor recruitment program, thus the interest began to enlarge as I learned more. The set up of the Red Cross Society of Seychelles was successful under the umbrella of the government, specifically with the Ministry of health... During that time we did a lot of humanitarian work with limited resources.

Gradually the Red Cross Society moved out under the Government's umbrella. The first office was based at the ex- LUNGOS premises, next to the stadium car park. It was a small office with a compartment as a store. One of our main activities was the collection of clothes and other useful items. We had our first ambulance as a donation from Japan. We did a lot of voluntary work at the old people's home, North East Point and the orphanages, and the best things was, that we did all these activities, with minimal resources. I remember we used each other's car for those who had, to transport volunteers to and from activities.

One major activity we used to do was, to send containers of goods to victims in Madagascar. Their situation was extremely critical and we had the opportunity to lend a helping hand. We did it gladly!

We then started to make contacts with the International society which we sought help from. We were also very active with cases of finding missing persons! Many families came to look for their relatives, because during those time many Seychellois women went to work abroad, especially in Beruth and at those time, they had to leave their children in orphanages or with the nuns, ad often they lose track of their children by the time they are ready to come back home.

Another major event that has happened through which proved to the world of our commitment and capabilities was, during the Tsunami which hit Seychelles unexpectedly, then the cyclone, which destroyed part of the Grand-Anse Airport, on Praslin. All of the above mentioned incident gave the RCSS many experiences on how to handle disasters and emergencies. From there on, I believe that Red Cross Society of Seychelles gained recognition especially on the International scene, and therefore began to receive assistance in many areas.

This is how the Red Cross Society of Seychelles is what it is today!

## Monique Julie – joined the RCSS 2009

What was the story behind joining the RCSS.

I was attending training with the emergency Brigade at Belombre and Mrs Servina was the one facilitating the session so, she encouraged me to join the Red Cross. However, I use to participate in a lot of voluntary work at district level. I am currently a member of the Belombre action team and also the emergency Brigade. We do a lot of activities and focus on all vulnerable groups in our district.

I used to work in the hospital as a nursing assistance whereby I was already attending to the needs of sick people and the vulnerable, so it spurred my interest in humanitarian activity and I wanted to do something more fruitful to quench the thirst that I had, in helping out the community.

I was very much taken by the training I received and the invitation to join Red Cross was very tempting, so I decided to take the step and register with RCSS. Since then I encountered different opportunities and learned a lot of things in regards to Disaster management, saving people lives and many other things. I have learned a lot about First Aid procedures, which I did not get a chance to fully explore, while working at the hospital and am very glad to have broadened my knowledge in this particular area.

One memorable activity during the years I served as a volunteer with the RCSS, was attending a training camp which was organized at the headquarter sometimes back and it was for three consecutive days. A group of volunteers were trained in different areas, and the training was very intense. Despite the challenge the whole activity was interesting. We did have our schedule of work not to forgetting cooking... It was real fun! I really enjoyed that and I think that the RCSS should consider reviving such activities.

During the tropical cyclone "Felleng", which hit Seychelles in 2013, I remember I was working as a volunteer, at NSC, catering for the families that were brought to shelter homes and my heart went out to the little children who lost their homes and their belongings. I did whatever I could to make them feel better despite what had happened to them.

## MY RED CROSS RED CRESCENT STORY!



Mrs Raymonde Lespoire, born on the 9 June 1930 has reached the ripe age of 84 years old.

**"I AM PROUD TO BE A VOLUNTEER FOR THE RED CROSS.** I still have my Red Cross- Volunteer certificate signed by Mr Chrystold Chetty the first president of the Red Cross Society of Seychelles! " exclaimed Mrs Lespoire...

Two Red Cross staff visited Mrs Lespoire during the month of July in order to show appreciation for what she has been and remained for the Red Cross. According to her, no matter how old she is getting, the Red Cross and humanitarian world remain one of the best thing that has ever happened to her.

Mrs Lespoire is a long standing member of the Red Cross Society of Seychelles and to date is paying her membership fee and says that she will never quit being a volunteer of the Red Cross. Despite her age, Mrs Lespoire is a very active elderly who enjoys visiting her children and grandchildren from time to time. For her, life is to enjoy and make the most of. Mrs Lespoire is living with one of her son at Reef Estate, quite far up the hill, but she said that the location does not prevent her from moving here and there.

Many, many years ago, she remembered when she joined the RCSS while its humble headquarters was still at the LUNGOS building in Victoria. During those time, she remembered colleagues such as Said Mondon who was an active member but departed, abruptly when he passed away some time back, Mrs Lespoire reminisces: "This was so sad, I still have a picture of him which I look at every now and then..." Sighing in deep thought.... Lucie Dogley is also someone she remembers very well. She says that Lucy was so friendly and so determined in what she was doing that she inspired her to be a Red Cross volunteer.

She also remembers the that time Red Cross organization was still setting up, not so many things was going on, it was mainly meetings and training for existing volunteers. One of the most important activities they were doing was the collection of clothes, whereby they had to manage the amount of clothes that was coming in and also some volunteer work which they were actively participating in.

Mrs Lespoire went into a deep thought for a while and said: "You know....i still want to come to the Red Cross, what I can do to help? I can make bags so that you guys can sell for fund raising....or maybe I can still manage the clothes, sort them out and put order in the store!" These are the things that Mrs Lespoire inspires to do, even at this age she still has the heart of volunteerism.....



# COUP de COEUR Newsletter

Red Cross Society of Seychelles

November-2014



## BARBARA CAROLUS- ANDRE

My Red Cross story is linked to the evolution of our National Society for the past 25 years crafting its rightful space in the national landscape. As a founding member of the Red Cross Society of Seychelles, I have volunteered in various capacities within the Society with immense benefits for both my personal and professional development.



In the beginning our efforts focused on accreditation by the ICRC, building up the volunteer base and setting up programmes. My main role was to set up the First Aid programme which included training of First Aid Instructors, buying of First Aid equipment, ordering First Aid Manuals brought to us from the UK courtesy of Air Seychelles, designing the first aid training programme and training of first aiders. We were particularly proud of training Air Seychelles crew at that time! The Society had trained some 300 volunteers by the time it was accredited by the ICRC. I am really humbled to meet so many people who greet me and say "Do you remember me? You trained me in First Aid!" Resuscitation

Anne and a small model skeleton had a permanent home in my home wardrobe. As a trainer in Exploring Humanitarian law I collaborated in the introduction of the subject in teacher training and School curriculum and was pleased to present the progress in a Pan African conference held in South Africa. EHL is now a core training module for RCSS volunteers. 25 years later I am serving as President of the Red Cross Society of Seychelles, a leadership position that has enabled me to participate in the development of our national society, the development of regional cooperation of Indian Ocean National societies and represent the Society at International level. Little did I know of all the human suffering that exists all over the world but I also learnt that all of us can make a difference and bring hope to others in need. I thank my family for all their support in pursuing my volunteer activities. I have met many wonderful Red Crossers from across the globe both in Seychelles on the various committees and during activities from Mahe, Praslin and la Digue and abroad on the occasion of Red Cross Conferences and workshops. It has been a great opportunity to visit a number of countries such as Mauritius, Reunion, Kenya, South Africa, Senegal, Cape Verde, Hungary, Geneva Switzerland and Sydney Australia. I am proud to be part of the Red Cross family.



**A RED CROSSER FOREVER: BY Raj**

It was on 2004 at North Island with the NCC were a group of kids including me participated in the Children's Wilderness. That's where I met a Red Cross Officer for the 1st time in my life and that was Marie France Bristol a nice lady very caring and always with a smile shining on her face and Sir Guy the muscle man. And that's where I wanted to be someone, someone like them a red crosser. I followed Marie France everywhere she moved even after we came back to Mahe and then we kept in touch and one day I went to her house and she was leaving for a standby she had no choice but to take me with her since they were in need of helpers on that day, so that's where it all began we got a casualty and before she could call me for help I was already there helping. I was working very fast and she loved it and later on a few days after I was already a member of the Youth Red Cross Society thru her. I was studying at Belonie School where I helped to form a school Red Cross club and later on I became a certified Standard First Aider and I was instructed by Patrick and Sandra, two great first aid instructors. I was then placed on standby very frequently and later became a Life Guard and a disaster responder. During my school time, there was a boy named Sam who needed financial help for his overseas treatment where his parents was asking for help all-around. I had an idea so I asked our Mahe Branch Coordinator who was Sandra at that time, permission to go around town with donation box to try help him. A group of Youth Red crossers from different school clubs where mobilize that day to collect the money around Victoria. It turned out well and successful and we had a little ceremony where the collected money was presented to the mother of the little boy and by me. The smile on the little boy's face and many thanks from his mother made me so proud. Then my life continued in RCSS as a volunteer, many things happened whereby I learned so many things. However we also faced many difficulties and challenges, through it all I learned how to improvise met many nice people with the same task TO HELP. Red Cross played a big part in my life and without it I would not be the person I am today. A Red Crosser forever!

## Mr Francois Quatre

Mr Francois Quatre, has been so far an active volunteer who joined in 1997. He was recruited by a member of the first committee, to be part of the Praslin Branch. He was told that the organization needed volunteers to help make a difference in the life of the needy through humanitarian work. Being a dedicated team player, he has served the past seven committees as an ordinary member and is willing to remain. He has been active all along and has made a lot of friends among the Red Cross society. His greatest achievement so far is, the satisfaction of making a difference in someone else's life. He is most fulfilled whenever he can bring support to those in needs, in times of disaster.



## Genevieve



My love affair with Red Cross started in 2000 when I decided to acquire the skills of a first aider. It was an eye opener as I had become a mum and first aid was essential. However, I must admit that administering first aid to others, remains a constant hurdle for me as I get cold feet when confronted with a realistic situation. This reminds me how serious such a responsibility one has as a first aider.

Becoming a volunteer member of Red Cross brought significant changes in my life as I discovered the basic principles and tried to apply them in everyday circumstances. I learned to give without expecting much in return and experience the joy of helping the most vulnerable. I've participated in numerous activities namely Disaster Preparedness and Response, Aids Awareness campaign, BDRT workshops, First Aid refresher courses, assist in the Carnival de Victorial, National Day and for National Athletics competition. I also got the chance to participate in a training in Reunion for disaster risk reduction, at PIROI where I had the opportunity to meet other volunteers from the region. When the Felleng tropical depression hit the country, most volunteers came to the rescue of the vulnerable in the affected areas and I decided to be on the scene to bring help to those in need.

My memories at Red Cross so far are bitter-sweet as they have brought me joy and at the same time pain. My most joyful recollection was at Cap Ternay for a training and practice for Disaster preparedness and response in the month of May. Roy Nibourette was our facilitator and I must admit, he was no one to mess with. The highlight was going on the scene in the ambulance with our late Said Mondon. Gosh! How I miss such a sympathetic and joyful fellow! And he passed away exactly a year after. Needless to say, we were shaken to the core. I also had the privilege of meeting two other wonderful souls namely Trevor Renaud and Patrick Dubel. I learned so much from them especially for their humility, joyfulness and drive for reaching out to help others tirelessly. Sadly, Red Cross lost Trevor in 2011 and our dear Patrick only a fortnight ago. I am still in denial for Patrick though. I cannot accept that I won't see that warm smile again. Rest In Peace my dear brothers and till we meet again. I shall always be a Red Cross volunteer as I have benefitted a lot to continue upholding the fundamental principles and bringing assistance to the most vulnerable.

## Harry Dingwall

### A FAITHFUL AND REGULAR BLOOD DONOR

I got attracted to the Red Cross Society of Seychelles two years after it was founded in August 1989, and immediately after, I joined the movement whereby it was led mainly by my humanitarian instinct basically to help the most vulnerable people.

Other reasons for joining is that since I wanted to take care of other people, I know that I needed specific training in different areas which are the main focus of the Red Cross such as first aid, ambulance driver and many more. For sure these training have been very fruitful as it has increases my knowledge and help me to learn new things which have turn me into a reliable and well equipped First Aider and ambulance driver.

Ever since I joined the Red Cross, I have always remained loyal and sincere with our National society. As I speak, I am still very active and still participating in different activities. However, despite my working schedule I always make sure that I have some time to give towards my humanitarian responsibilities.

I have benefited a lot from the Red Cross, and feel ready to help out in times of emergencies in my community as well as on a national level. As a volunteer, I feel that I can give a helping hand when these unexpected incidents happen.

The most interesting thing which I learned and loved with the RCSS is, the 7 fundamental principles of which is used to guide our work and the services we give in the community. I am very drawn to this because it allows to care for all people without any barriers such race, belief, religion or political affiliation.

Not to forget, I am also a faithful and regular blood donor. I donate blood every 3 months ever since I became a Red Cross volunteer. This is one of the most wonderful humanitarian acts one can ever do to make a difference and save a life. Being a volunteer for the Red Cross Society of Seychelles has been very rewarding for me and I just love doing what I do with all my heart. I am Very happy to be working in a group as a family. "Linyon I fer Lafors!"

*with love Harry.*



## ANITA JOUBERT

Joined in 2010 Red Cross Society of Seychelles as the Praslin and La Digue branch coordinator. "I have met a lot of people as a staff of the RCSS. I noticed that there had been a change in my personality: from timid to being more open. Being in the organization has completely brought a change to my life in a positive way. I have been influenced by successful people with brilliant characters who have inspired me and make me believe in myself. I've been through places I never thought I'd be, as well as exposing myself to various situations where definitely, I have put the knowledge acquired from the Red Cross into practices. Surrounded by Red Cross volunteers is like being surrounded by a second family whom you can't do without...."