



Home

# Living again

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## Shining a light on organ donations

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When someone dies, they leave everything behind, except their body. That's unless they were an organ donor. Spanish surgeon Dr José Manuel García Buitrón says organ donations, especially cadaver donations (organs donated by people who were previously healthy but die due to an accident or brain bleeding, etc) allow donors the opportunity to live on after they have died. "Don't donate; everything goes. Donate; you leave something behind. You live on in someone."



From left, Dr Prisca Bradshaw, Dr Antón Fernandez, Dr Bridget Elcock and Spanish surgeon Dr José Manuel García Buitrón.

In November last year, Buitrón led two local doctors, Dr Prisca Bradshaw and Dr Bridget Elcock, in a five-day advanced international training course in transplant co-ordination, as part of a pilot project for the improvement of live and cadaver organ donation and transplantation in T&T. The doctors were trained in the legal, technical and social aspects of organ harvesting, and how to keep body and organs in a condition that can be used for transplant. Bradshaw and Elcock subsequently participated in a hospital internship at the Complejo Hospitalario Universitario in Coruña, Spain. Another local surgeon, Dr James Byam, is in Spain undergoing training in transplant surgery. Spain is the leading country in the world in organ donation and transplantation. It has been at the top of the transplant list at the international level for 17 years, and doubling the European average rate of donors per million.

The project is being sponsored by the Repsol Foundation, with an aim to improve donation rates and equality in access to transplants in T&T. The foundation is working closely with the Ministry of Health and the National Organ Transplant Unit (NOTU). Buitrón believes T&T has great potential for organ donation and transplantation. "Trinidad and Tobago is a country that has everything that can accommodate this. All the conditions are there to do it," he said, adding that the existence of the functioning NOTU and the willingness of the Ministry of Health and companies like Repsol to support the project made it more promising. "People need donors. It will be more probable that you will need an organ than you'll be a donor." Buitrón said in Spain, 95 per cent of transplants came from cadaver donors. "The drive of the project is to get to that point in T&T," he stressed. Medical director of the NOTU, Dr Lesley Roberts, says the unit has done 83 kidney transplants since it was established in January 2006. Three of the organs came from cadaver donors and the remaining organs from live donors. "That certainly doesn't meet our demand," she lamented, as there are approximately 738 people currently on dialysis, with one third being potential transplant candidates. Donors are needed. "In Spain, transplant co-ordinators are based in all hospitals. We are trying to follow the model of what Spain has developed. Not that we are going to import wholesale, of course. It will be a matter of observing and putting a local spin on it," Roberts said.

At some hospitals in Spain, Buitrón said, 250 transplants, including heart, lungs, liver, kidney and pancreas, were done every year. Roberts explained that in T&T, only kidney transplants were done because of the high demand for them at the time the unit was established. Eventually, the programme will be extended to include hearts, pancreas, lungs and livers. But kidney transplants was a good place to start, Buitrón opined. "Kidneys can be harvested from both live and cadaver donors, because you have two. "In addition, transplants are less expensive than dialysis. For some people it is financially impossible to sustain dialysis as their only means of treatment for renal failure."

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### IN CASE YOU MISSED IT.

#### Minister: Manpower issues cause of delay



Works and Transport Minister Rohan Sinanan yesterday admitted that the delay in Monday's maiden voyage of the Cabo Star from Port-of-Spain to Tobago was as a result of a manpower issue by the Port...

#### Narine leads Mystery to title



Sunil Narine continued his exploits with the bat on Saturday night, as he led Mystery XI to the Powerade Central Super League T20 title over a star-studded Bamboo All Stars at Pierre Road in...

#### Hasely Crawford exhibition at UWI



July 2017 marks 41 years since Hasely Crawford won T&T's first Olympic gold medal.

#### Court okays liquidators



The Government has won its bid to appoint a pair of provisional liquidators for CL Financial (CLF).

#### Calypso Spikers off to Jamaica for CAZOVA defence



T&T senior women volleyballers left here yesterday for Kingston, Jamaica in two groups, where they will put their strangle-hold on the Senior Caribbean Zonal Volleyball Association Women's...

#### Beware of Impulse Buying: A Subtle But Deadly Expense



Want to know how to destroy your finances really quickly?

Listen carefully, because here's the secret: just buy things impulsively.

#### Employers are free to avoid mentally ill



Future employment would have been one of the considerations when deciding to publicly share my account of living with mental illness.

#### Lifehacks for Saving



It's an unfortunate reality that not many people are taught to be financially literate from an early age. Schools teach French, English and Spanish, but never the language of money.

**Social media hate for pick-up murder accused**



Angry shouts echoed outside the Siparia Magistrates' Court yesterday, as Yucklan Sancaro confronted Anthony Sinanan, the man charged with murdering her son David Sancaro.

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