



Heart to Heart Global Cardiac Care

Measurably Expanding Access Since 1989

SITE: NATIONAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL (HNN)
LOCATION: SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA
COLLABORATION LAUNCHED: 2021

MARCH 8–22, 2023
CARDIAC TRAINING MISSION 4
PATIENT STORY



PATIENT PROFILE

Child	Gabriel R.
Age	7 years old
DOB	December 25, 2015
Home	Paraiso, Costa Rica
Parents	Pamela and Jose
Diagnosis	PA/VSD; s/p VSD closure, multiple conduit interventions, pulmonary branch plasty (2016-2017)
Open heart surgery	RV-PA conduit replacement, RPA plasty (March 15, 2023)
Discharged from PICU	March 21, 2023

Based on an interview conducted in Spanish by Lucie Everett, Heart to Heart staff.

HOUSEHOLD AND FAMILY

Seven-year-old Gabriel lives with his family in Paraiso – a Costa Rican city literally named “Paradise.” Gabriel’s mother Pamela describes him as “loving, restless, and super smart” – and it soon became clear to us that she was right! Gabriel likes to paint, draw, and play, but mostly, he loves to learn about sharks and natural disasters. He was excited to teach us the difference between tornadoes (which form on land and do not occur in Costa Rica) and hurricanes (which form in the ocean and travel to land).

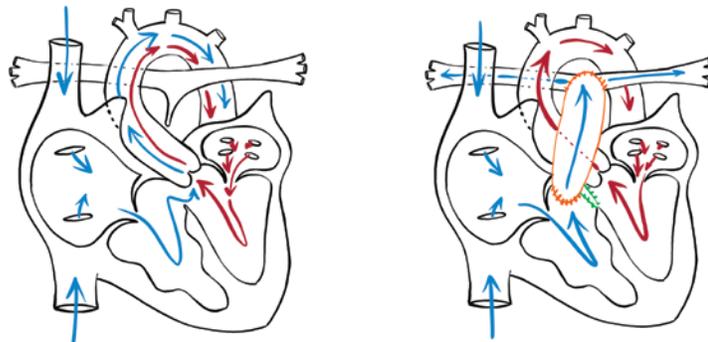
CHILD’S DEVELOPMENT AND MEDICAL HISTORY

Gabriel was born with pulmonary atresia with ventricular septal defect (PA/VSD). PA/VSD is characterized by the absence of the pulmonary valve and a sizable hole between the heart’s ventricles. Fortunately, local doctors were able to diagnose Gabriel’s condition quickly enough to allow him to undergo surgical treatment by the time he was one month old. Since then, Gabriel has undergone several additional interventions to ensure sufficient blood flow from his heart to his lungs.

CURRENT CONDITION

In October 2022, a team of Heart to Heart specialists reviewed Gabriel’s case alongside Costa Rican colleagues at the National Children’s Hospital (HNN). Together, we determined that Gabriel needed a previously placed conduit replaced. On March 15, 2023, Gabriel underwent life-saving open heart surgery performed by our joint team. His surgery went smoothly and Gabriel was able to return home about one week afterwards.

Thankfully, Gabriel will now have the opportunity to live a long, healthy life. His mother hopes to see him “achieve his goals and become a great man.”



Left: A heart with pulmonary atresia, ventricular septal defect (PA/VSD). **Right:** Repaired PA/VSD. Children born with pulmonary atresia lack a pulmonary artery, which greatly reduces the amount of blood flow to the lungs. This, in turn, causes insufficient oxygenated blood to flow to the child’s body, resulting in a symptom called cyanosis, where the skin appears to be blue. Surgically implanting a right ventricle to pulmonary artery (RV-PA) conduit and closing the VSD corrects this issue.