



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



“My baby is a fighter... a warrior. He clings to life in his own way... He gives me the strength to keep going. If my baby is strong and brave, I have to be the same things for him.”

– MARJORIE, JEIKOL'S MOTHER

HOUSEHOLD AND FAMILY

Jeikol is a two-month-old baby who was born with pulmonary atresia with ventricular septal defect. He has two older sisters, one who is 18 years old and one who is 16 years old. The family lives in Aguas Zarcas, Costa Rica, which is about a six-hour drive from the National Children's Hospital (HNN) in San Jose.

Marjorie recounts her harrowing journey from Aguas Zarcas to San Jose: they left the hospital at two in the morning and were driven to San Jose in an ambulance – Jeikol was in an incubator the whole ride. “Arriving in San Jose was like arriving in a new world,” she says, “I didn't know anything or anyone here. I was scared for my baby and I was scared because I was far away from my home and my family.”

CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT AND MEDICAL HISTORY

When he was born, Jeikol remained in observation at a local hospital near Aguas Zarcas. Although he was cyanotic, meaning that his skin had a bluish tint to it, he was not initially diagnosed with congenital heart disease (CHD). Cyanosis indicates that the body is not receiving sufficient oxygen and is a common symptom of CHD, but can also be a symptom of other health problems.

After arriving to the National Children's Hospital by ambulance, Jeikol was seen by a pediatric cardiologist, who examined him and explained to Marjorie that Jeikol had a heart defect and would need to stay in the hospital. Baby Jeikol's condition was very unstable and local doctors knew that he would need surgery urgently.

CURRENT CONDITION

On March 10th, 2023, Jeikol underwent emergency open heart surgery at the National Children's Hospital. The HNN team performed his surgery with the assistance of Heart to Heart surgeon, Kirk Kanter. Together, they placed a Blalock-Taussig-Thomas (BTT) shunt in baby Jeikol's heart. Thanks to his life-saving surgery, Jeikol now has a chance to live a long, healthy life.

When we spoke to Jeikol's mother, just one week after his open heart surgery, she said to us with tears in her eyes, “Thank you from the bottom of my heart for what you did for my baby... for me. I'm without words.”

PATIENT PROFILE

Child	Jeikol J.
Age	2 months old
DOB	January 2, 2023
Home	Aguas Zarcas, Costa Rica
Parents	Marjorie
Diagnosis	PA/VSD; s/p PDA stent placement, LPA stenosis
Open heart surgery	Modified BTT shunt, PDA stent removal, LPA plasty (March 10, 2023)
Discharged from PICU	March 17, 2023

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