

## ♥ Heartfelt Stories: Roberto Ibrahim ♥



In late October 2015, a baby was born in Peru with a severe heart condition. In the first hours after his birth, his parents noticed that his feet and hands were a dusky blue and that he was breathing fast. Peruvian doctors performed an Echocardiogram and were overwhelmed by the complexity of the heart condition they saw. As fortune would have it, the Heart Care International team was operating at a cross town hospital. The imaging studies were sent to be reviewed by the HCI team and we confirmed the acute life threatening heart condition. This condition would require immediate surgery if there would be any hope for survival. In any country, such a surgery would be challenging and risky. Ricardo, the boy's father, began pleading for everything to be done to save his son's life.

The Heart Care International team were very moved by the appeal of the parents and the local doctors. Nevertheless, the operation would be extremely risky and time-consuming. Could the family and the team accept the worst?

*(over)*

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Heart Care International plans for our patients months in advance of a trip, ensuring that we have all the supplies for every patient who we plan to treat. Supplies for a 7-day old newborn was not something we had foreseen. Our founder and chief surgeon, Robert Michler, explained to the father that even if we could operate on his son, we didn't have the cannulas for his size - he was too small. By chance, Dr. Ibrahim Abdullah, another surgeon on the team, happened to have packed two extra-small cannulas in his carry-on luggage.

The HCI team met and together decided to take on this extremely high risk operation. The surgeons explained this to the parents, whose response was firm - they would do anything to save their son's life. The surgery was scheduled.

After an 11 hour, successful surgery, this baby boy returned to the ICU. Two weeks later, he was well enough to return home to his family, but not before his parents announced their newborn child's name- Roberto Ibrahim, the names of the surgeons who accepted the risk and saved his life.

Four years later, Roberto Ibrahim continues to visit us with his parents during Heart Care International's annual trips to Peru.

