

Vijay Patel gifts 30 NGOs with R75,000 each on his 75th birthday | 02 October 2020



The beneficiaries in a souvenir photograph with Mr Patel and Minister Larue (Photo: Jude Morel)

Even if his company, Vijay Construction, is sailing through tough times, Vijay Patel rose above the tides and celebrated his 75th birthday with 30 non-governmental organisations, each of which has received the sum of R75,000 from the businessman.

This event took place at the Nayopi conference room at Providence in the presence of the Minister for Family Affairs, Mitcy Larue.

The question which comes to mind is why such a gesture at this time? Mr Patel stressed on the fact that this donation comes from his personal account and not from the company's account.

“For all the years I have benefited from the company and it is my duty to give back to the community. For me it's a pleasure, and when you share with other people, the pleasure is shared. In any case the company's account is inaccessible right now,” he explained.

Why the NGOs? Mr Patel said that “because I personally cannot go out there in the community as well as the NGOs do! If you want to help the community, then you have to choose people who are involved in the community. I have limited contact and resources, so for me it's better to choose that way and reach the community much further. I am leaving it up to the NGOs to make use of the money as they deem appropriate!”

Mr Patel explained that at first he was thinking of 25 organisations but eventually 30 organisations were chosen.

“How people perceive this act, I cannot be bothered with that. My intention is not to gain any mileage out of it. I wanted a quiet event, but it was suggested to me to do it this way as it can be informative and also inspire other people. If it is inspiring to other people, I will be happy.”

At 75 years old, Mr Patel is still going strong, as said by himself. “I am still able to walk comfortably, do my cycling and swim a kilometre every week; no problem for now and I am quite happy about that.”

Mr Patel admitted he celebrated only when he turned 50, 60 and 75 years old. “But I celebrated with my staff. I always celebrate with my staff first and I also share some wealth. Without the staff, Vijay Patel would not be what he is today!”

Mr Patel concluded his chat with a wise advice to all by stating: “Life is long, life is not just five, ten years. How to make use of that life is up to you. You can make it enjoyable or you can make it miserable! There are problems and get on with it. Remain strong physically and mentally!”

Minister Larue congratulated Mr Patel on his birthday and thanked him for his kindness. “Your gesture today shows us how compassionate and great you are. You brought the NGOs together and showered your kindness. Without the NGOs, the government on its own cannot fulfill all the work on the field. I thank you on behalf of the government for all that you have done for the community.”

Reactions of the beneficiaries...

Fatime Kante, Seychelles Tennis Association: “I would like to say a big thank you to Mr Patel for thinking of us on his 75th birthday. He has always been involved in sports and sports promotion. He has contributed a lot in the development of tennis in Seychelles. Receiving such a donation shows how his attention is also in the development of a sane society. We welcome this donation with great heart and wish him the very best.”

Soeur Rosefine, Foyer de la Providence and Ste Elizabeth : “Vijay Patel helps us to respond to the needs of our children in our shelters and we thank him for this charitable gesture.”

Rabia Summers, Marine Conservation Society Seychelles: “We are profoundly grateful for this donation from Mr Patel. We are in awe of his commitment and generosity.”

Dr Frauke Fleischer-Dogley, Seychelles Islands Foundation: “Especially in times of a global pandemic in which we are living right now, to have people open their hands like Mr Vijay has done today makes a huge difference. This reminds us, it is not only about the good times but standing together in difficult times with conviction that by joining together we will overcome whatever challenges is there in front of us.”

Dr Barry Nourrice, Agricultural Producers Association of Seychelles: “I was young when I received a scholarship with the company Vijay Patel. I want people to realise that whatever happened is historic. An organisation invested in a Seychellois and as we just celebrated our 250th anniversary, we got our first doctorate in Soil Science. They made history by giving me this opportunity. My relation with Mr Vijay has always been friendly. I always followed his good advice and am happy where I am right now. After my degree, he encouraged me to develop my wings and find my destination. Today’s activity is very deep and meaningful. I consider myself a product of love and encouragement of this man!”

The full list of beneficiaries are: Citizens Engagement Platform Seychelles, Cancer Concern Association, Cousin Island Special Reserve, Foyer de la Solitude, Foyer de Nazareth, Futuro Sports Sesel, Green Islands Foundation, Island Conservation Society, Lions Club of Seychelles, Marine Conservation Society Seychelles, Missionaries of Charity, Moyenne Island Foundation Society, National Council for Children, National Council for the Elderly Special Fund, North East Point Rehab Centre, Rotaract Club of Mahé Club Fund, Rotary Club of Victoria, Foyer Ste Elizabeth, School for the Exceptional Child, Seychelles Centennial Women Lions Club, Seychelles Cricket Association, Agricultural Producers Association, Seychelles Hindu Kovil Sangam, Seychelles Islands Foundation, Seychelles Round Table, Seychelles Sustainable Tourism Foundation, Seychelles Tennis Association, Soroptimist International Club of Victoria, Swimming Pool National Sports Council and Wildlife Clubs of Seychelles.

Vidya Gappy