

trauma first aid so that they are able to respond to victims of traffic injuries and treat them at the crash scene. Later he says to me, "Among the things we are teaching is proper handling and transportation of patients so we can prevent unnecessary spinal cord injuries. A lot of people die or suffer life changing injuries simply because they are not getting simple care."

Each person I meet is here for a reason. They care about their fellow suffering humans. That's the highest form love can take. Dr Jon lost his father in a car crash in the US. He felt a strong sense of duty to help when he visited Bangladesh the first time. Then there is Carolyn Scott who is the president of Friends of CRP-Canada Society, a major fundraiser for CRP. She has visited CRP every year since she first visited the organisation during her stay in Bangladesh while her husband was the Canadian High commissioner here

“CRP is the only organisation for the management of the injury and rehabilitation of patients.”

(1993-96). "I think I am the luckiest person to have met Valerie," she says with a smile. Foysal Rahman, the paralysed High School teacher started his own organisation *Protibandhi Unnayan Shngstha* in Jhalakati and has helped about 2500 people like him. In 2013, he received a national award.

The Light That Shines in the Darkness

Valerie Ann Taylor

Founder & Coordinator of CRP

A fellow of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (FCSP), Valerie Ann Taylor first came to Bangladesh with the Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) in 1969 to work as a physiotherapist in the Christian Hospital, Chandraghona in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Her stay was interrupted by the War of Independence in 1971. She came back two months before the independence of Bangladesh.

In 1973 Valerie returned to England to raise funds to establish a rehabilitation centre for paralysed people in Bangladesh. She stayed in England for two years before returning in 1975. It took another four years before CRP was able to admit its first patients in 1979. CRP found a permanent home in Savar in 1990 where the head office is situated.

Valerie's achievements have been recognised with numerous accolades at home and abroad. She received the OBE (Order of the British Empire) in 1995 from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Arthur Eyre Brook Gold Medal in 1996 and the Bangladesh Independence Award in 2004. She has also received several other awards among them Mahatma Gandhi Peace Award (2009), Lifetime Achievement Award (2009) by Hope Foundation for Women & Children of Bangladesh (USA), Princess Diana Gold Medal (2007), National Social Service Award (2000) by the Ministry of Social Welfare, and Anannya Top Ten Award (2000).

In 1998 she was granted Bangladeshi citizenship.

Valerie has been legal guardian to two Bangladeshi girls for several years. She lives near CRP, Savar with her younger adopted daughter, Poppy



Valerie Ann Taylor

while Joyti, the eldest, a computer operator at CRP, was married in 2007. Valerie Taylor was born on the February 8, 1944, in Bromley, Kent, UK to parents Marie and William Taylor.



Encouraged by Valerie, Md Foysal Rahman established his own organisation that has helped around 2,500 people.



Carolyn Scott



Jon Moussally, MD



Prof. Tomasz Tasiemski

The moment has arrived. Dr Jon has just finished talking to Valerie. She firmly shakes my hand and softly says, "Thank you so much for finding the time to come here and support us."

I am a little confused and totally overwhelmed. First of all, it's my job. Second, I haven't actually met anyone like her before—someone who has sacrificed her entire life to serve some of the most neglected people in the world. Her kind eyes remind me of Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa whom I had an opportunity to listen to when he delivered the commencement speech in a university in Oklahoma, US in the early 2000s. I know when I am in presence of greatness.

I ask her the inevitable question – why does she

do all this? "If we send these people home after giving them the initial treatment, what are they going to do with their lives? Without vocational training and a chance of a job, they will be left alone in backrooms of their homes and watch life slip by."

Now I know what Foysal Rahman meant when he said, "Valerie took care of me like a mother." Who else but a mother loves this way?

"People like Foysal and Munni and David and everyone else here give me so much hope for the future," she says. "Physically, they have so much going against them. But they have a lot to teach us all, not allowing their disability to interfere with their lives. So it is up to us the able bodied members of the community to open the door to them." ■