

# Foundation a blessing for Burnett



AS THE **Heart and Stroke Foundation of Barbados** celebrates its 40th anniversary, the organisation reflects on its continued mission to support individuals in their recovery from heart and stroke-related health challenges.

Over the years, the Foundation has played a pivotal role in guiding patients through their rehabilitation, helping them regain not just their health, but their independence. Rehabilitation has always been a major focus for the Foundation, recognising the importance of post-treatment care in a patient's journey to recovery. This is evident in the testimony of one of their patients, Kathy Burnett, whose story is an inspiring example of resilience and determination in the face of a life-altering health crisis.

At 58, Burnett was an active woman, accustomed to a physically demanding job as a police officer. And as someone who had always taken pride in her health, she felt strong and capable. However, one Saturday, everything changed. While on duty and enjoying a small snack, she suddenly felt an intense headache. "It genuinely felt like horses were trampling on my head," she recalled, vividly remembering the overwhelming pain that took hold of her. Without hesitation, she informed her sergeant, who immediately called an ambulance.

Upon arriving at the hospital, Burnett was violently sick, and the doctors initially suspected a severe migraine. However, she remembered one doctor saying to her,



**KATHY BURNETT GOING THROUGH her paces at the gym located at the Heart & Stroke Foundation headquarters. (SLD)**

"It would be a surprise that you are only now receiving migraines at your age. They typically start from much younger and fade away." Because of this, she underwent a CAT scan to check for any other potential issues, but when the results showed nothing abnormal, she was sent home with instructions to rest for the week.

Unfortunately, the relief was short-lived because the day before she returned to work, the headache came back, more intense than before. Unable to wait for the ambulance, Burnett's son drove her to meet it halfway. After this, her memory is a blur, and the next sequence of events was pieced together by her family.

Burnett was diagnosed with a brain aneurysm, a condition she had never expected, and was transferred to Colombia for further treatment. When she regained

consciousness, it was a slow and gradual process, aided by the support of dedicated medical staff. One of those who left a lasting impact on her was Dr Gill, who had also treated her mother in the past.

When Burnett returned from Colombia, she spent two weeks in the hospital to start healing. However, her road to recovery was not just about regaining her physical strength but about adapting to a new reality. So after weeks in a wheelchair, she made a conscious decision to take her first steps. "It was truly mind over matter. I just decided to get up and try to walk," she said.

It was that first step that marked a turning point. With consistent effort, she began regaining more and more of her independence, though the emotional challenges were just as difficult. "The hardest part for me was when I first came

home and was now getting accustomed to my newfound lack of independence. Having always been someone who did everything for myself, this transition was particularly hard. But I must give credit to the **Heart & Stroke Foundation** who I believe is responsible for much of my progress and the support I received. I must also recognise the doctors, nurses and especially my family who were always there. And a special shout-out to Jackie, my occupational therapist at the Foundation, who continues to help me with various exercises."

Burnett's experience also brought a shift in her perspective on life and health. "When I was a little girl, I used to hear the words 'stroke' or 'passover' when referring to brain aneurysms. It was always something that was attributed to older people." But having gone through it herself, her perspective has evolved.

"I witness young people having strokes, and even for me, I was shocked, so it changed my perspective that it is no longer something that only happens to the elderly." Now 60, Kathy Burnett's testimony highlights not only the impact of the **Heart and Stroke Foundation's** rehabilitation services but also the incredible strength and resilience of the individuals they support.

The Foundation's 40-year commitment to guiding patients through their recovery is reflected in stories like Burnett's, where the journey to health is marked by perseverance, support and a renewed outlook on life. **(DT)**

## CONGRATULATIONS to the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Barbados

on reaching 40 years of dedicated advocacy,  
education, and life-saving efforts.

Acute Vision is proud to support the  
HSFB's ongoing campaigns and  
honoured to have contributed to  
the creation of some of their  
impactful public  
awareness  
initiatives.

**HERE'S TO  
40 YEARS  
OF HEART,  
DEDICATION  
& PURPOSE!**



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### A Tribute to the Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados Inc.

The Light & Power proudly congratulates the Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados Inc. (HSFB) on 40 years of dedicated service to the nation. As a leader in cardiovascular health and wellness, HSFB has played a pivotal role in education, prevention, and advocacy across Barbados.

At Light & Power, we hold safety, health and employee well-being as core values. For over a decade, HSFB has supported BLPC's corporate wellness efforts through nursing services, health checks, life-saving training, and nutritional guidance — enhancing the well-being of our workforce and reinforcing our commitment to employee health and safety.

Their impact extends far beyond our company, improving lives through public education campaigns, community outreach, and national health advocacy.

We salute the leadership, staff, and volunteers of HSFB on this incredible milestone. BLPC remains proud to support and partner with the Foundation in building a healthier, stronger Barbados.

**Congratulations on 40 years of excellence and meaningful impact!**

