

A UNITED MISSION

THE TEAM'S PERSPECTIVE

[unintelligible]

[Andrea:] To see a child smile, or a parent smile, or even cry afterwards because you're changing their life. It's an unbelievable experience.

[Marc Levitt, Pediatric Surgeon, CTO Founder:] What are we really trying to do? We're just trying to have kids be like kids- no concerns, no worries. That would be a dream come true. I believe there is so much need, that that isn't happening anytime soon. But, if we get the care to the people that need it, and others besides me can get that care accomplished, then I can rest.

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[Andrea:] We're usually about 15 to 20 people from all over the world. Doctors, nurses, volunteers, lots of volunteers, that go gladly to help any child all over the world. It's an unbelievable experience.

[Marc:] Hi, my name is Marc Levitt. I'm a pediatric surgeon, with a specialty in colorectal surgery for children.

[Julie Choueiki, Program Manager, CTO Director of Education:] Marc Levitt is a visionary. He is someone who thinks beyond the creativity that most of us embrace when we're caring for patients.

[Marc:] We'll get started here. Oh my God look at you!

[Marc:] I have an older brother who has cerebral palsy, and that affected our lives in a very dramatic way, very positive way, made us all wanna help the world.

[Julie:] He is "What can we do better? How can we do it better? Everyone's saying it can't be fixed. We can fix this child and we are obligated to fix this child. So, let's all put our heads together and figure out a way that this can be done."

[Marc:] The chance is 100% success. I'm told I wanted to be a doctor when I was aged 3.

[Andrea Kesar, Nurse and Marc's Cousin:] It was always assumed that he would go to medical school, but it was very hard for him to decide what kind of doctor he wanted to be. I had the thought that maybe he would be a surgeon.

[Marc:] I vividly remember when I was 12 years old when I had my appendicitis, and was in terrible pain, and the surgeon came and the next day I was feeling well. Felt that was magical.

[Julie:] He is always the person in the room who's saying "Why are we settling for this when we could provide this?"

[Marc:] By the way, there's a famous line, "the only thing worse than a blind believer, is a seeing denier".

[Julie:] In medicine, you have to be this way. You have to think "what can we do to be better?" This is where everything great comes from. This is where greatness lives.

[Marc:] And I said that I quote Nelson Mandela frequently. And he said, "it always seems impossible right before it's done".

[Chris Frake, OR Nurse, CTO Nursing Director:] He inspires people.

[Marc:] One day about 15 years ago, I was invited to join a team going for surgery to Honduras, and that is where CTO was launched- Colorectal Team Overseas. We realized that there was care to be provided in the developing world, where children were suffering with colorectal problems and could not possibly go anywhere to get that care other than where they were living, and we had to come to them.

[Catterina Bebington, Pediatric Nurse:] His vision is to train other doctors and other nurses to impart the knowledge that he has, worldwide.

[Giulia Brisighelli, Pediatric Surgeon:] He has created this reality in which surgeons and nurses and administrators from all over the world dedicate their free time to go to a foreign country to work, basically, and still consider that an amazing opportunity. He has orchestrated an amazing entity and nobody else could have conceptualized anything like in the brain- only Marc Levitt.

[Marc:] I began to work on that challenge, and trying to get good at colorectal care myself in my continued training, but also to build partnerships with all these other specialties. And that's lead to today, where we have a multi-functioning, multi-integrated and -disciplinary team, where everyone takes care of the patient as a unit, and each brings their own skillset to help the child.

[Julie:] And he's pushing and he's pushing and pushing, but he wants everyone to come with him. He doesn't want to be the big shining star. He wants everyone to come along with him, so that children everywhere are getting the same kind of care.

[Background, jokingly:] I don't work with any surgeons with flaws, so...

[Kathy Pazaropoulous, OR Nurse:] I've worked with a lot of surgeons, but I've never met anybody like Marc Levitt. He came in and opened up my world. He is the best team-builder I have ever met. I've never been treated as an equal within the OR [operating room]. There was no hierarchy- doctors and nurses. If you were on Marc's team, you were as important as the next person.

[Chris:] He makes you be a better person. He makes you want to work harder. He sets very high expectations, and expects you to meet them. He doesn't micromanage; he gives you a job to do and he walks away, and he lets you do it. And he trusts that you will do the very best that you can. And it makes you want to.

[Marc:] Let's try to get 6 done too on Monday

[off camera:] Okay

[off camera:] oof!

[Marc:] That was rough!

[Andrea:] Every single doctor is an angel with double wings, seriously. Every single doctor. To me, life has to have a purpose, a positive purpose. Just to swim through life doesn't seem very exciting or very emotional. And it's a great feeling to become involved, and passionate about something, something good, for the good of people, humanity, religion, race, creed. It doesn't matter who or what you are. You're a person, and if you need help, the next person has to give it to you. It's their commitment, and their moral conscience has to affirm that they do it. It's just that important. And personally, I don't think anything in the world is more satisfying than that. That's what it's all about- giving.

[THERE CAN BE NO KEENER REVELATION OF A SOCIETY'S SOUL THAN THE WAY IT TREATS ITS CHILDREN- NELSON MANDELA]