

## 18 children benefit from heart surgery

A team from the Congenital Heart Institute of Florida (CHIF) recently performed major and minor cardiac surgery on 18 children.

Nine children received cardiac surgery at the Bustamante Hospital for Children (BHC), while another nine received catheterisations concurrently at the University Hospital of the West Indies. Cardiac catheterisation is a medical procedure used to diagnose and treat some heart defects. "The region is extremely pleased to receive this type of support from CHIF as our local cardiac team continues to tackle the extensive list for children with heart conditions awaiting surgical intervention," Lyttleton Shirley, chairman of the South East Regional Health Authority (SERHA) said. "CHIF has been one of the groups that have consistently provided support for the local cardiac team for the past six years to perform complex cardiac surgeries during medical missions free of cost. We owe them a great deal of thanks." The 39 member team, headed by cardiac surgeon, Dr Jeff Jacobs, began surgeries on Wednesday, April 3, and completed them on Saturday, April 6. Between 400 and 500 children are born in Jamaica with congenital heart disease each year. Approximately 50 per cent of these children will require medical or surgical intervention. Currently, between one and three cardiac surgeries are done at Bustamante Hospital each week. Nevertheless, Shirley said the building of the new Cardiac Centre at the hospital, for which ground was broken in February, will allow for a more sustainable cardiac programme at the BHC. "At least two surgeries will be performed each day, increasing the opportunity for more lives to be saved and ultimately significantly reducing the waiting list for surgery," Shirley added.