

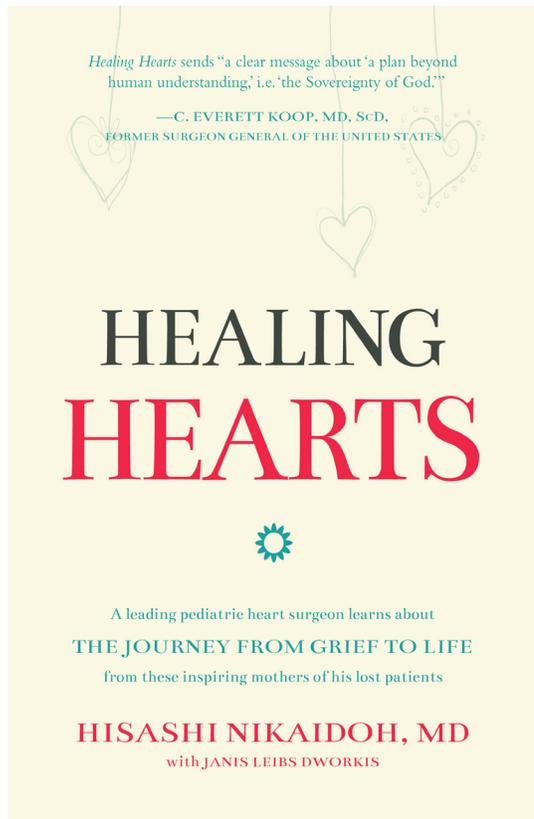


# news release

AMBASSADOR INTERNATIONAL  
427 Wade Hampton Blvd  
Greenville, SC 29617  
Ph. 864.235.2434  
Fx. 864. 235.2491  
[www.ambassador-international.com](http://www.ambassador-international.com)

MEDIA CONTACT: Alison Storm  
864.235.2434  
[media@emeraldhouse.com](mailto:media@emeraldhouse.com)

## EIGHT MOTHERS CONNECTED BY ONE DOCTOR SHARE THEIR STORIES OF LIFE AFTER LOSS SURGEON AND AUTHOR DR. HISASHI NIKAIKIDOH SEARCHES FOR COMFORT AFTER SON'S TRAGIC DEATH



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** Pediatric heart surgeon, Dr. Hisashi Nikaidoh, makes a living performing life-saving surgeries on hearts the size of walnuts. In more than four decades he's operated on thousands of them, and while many times the surgeries are successful, often patients pass away. In *Healing Hearts: A leading pediatric heart surgeon learns about the journey from grief to life from these inspiring mothers of his lost patients* (Ambassador International; May 2013; \$14.99, paperback) Dr. Nikaidoh explains how it wasn't until his own son Hitoshi was killed suddenly that he finally understood the magnitude of suffering that accompanies the loss of a child.

After his son's death, Dr. Nikaidoh sought comfort from the very parents he had once tried to comfort. "What I eventually learned from these eight women who have so generously shared their stories for *Healing Hearts* is that it is possible to move beyond the excruciating pain of losing a child," he says. The eight inspiring mothers have each contributed to the medical field-- many even working in the exact hospital where their sweet babies took their final breaths, Children's Medical Center of Dallas. "At least for these eight parents, it is possible to infuse their own lives with a deeper meaning by giving back to the very community that tried valiantly, though unsuccessfully, to save the lives of their precious children," says Nikaidoh.

The eight mothers, who all share a special connection with Dr. Nikaidoh, are courageously and honestly opening up in the pages of *Healing Hearts* about the experience of losing a child. "God certainly blessed [Dr. Nikaidoh] with wonderful talents to allow him to surgically mend those tiny hearts. But He gave him an even greater gift to comfort the parents of those whose little hearts were not meant to be mended," says mother and contributor Liz Etzkorn. Former US Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, who also lost a son, wrote the foreword for *Healing Hearts*.

Dr. Nikaidoh is the descendent of a long line of Buddhist priests, but became a Christian in his 40s. His faith completely changed the way he practiced medicine. "I no longer looked at life and death as being all about me--what I did, what I should have done, what I should not have done," he writes. "My newfound faith and understanding of God's hand in our lives had brought me to a place of greater freedom. Now that I was no longer feeling the burden and judgment of perfection, I felt a greater sense of freedom to be the best physician and surgeon I could possibly be and to more fully enjoy my work."

To learn more about Dr. Nikaidoh or the eight contributing mothers visit [TheHealingHeartsBook.com](http://TheHealingHeartsBook.com), or [Facebook.com/TheHealingHeartsBook](https://www.facebook.com/TheHealingHeartsBook). To receive a review copy of *Healing Hearts* or to connect with the author please contact publicist Alison Storm by email at [media@emeraldhouse.com](mailto:media@emeraldhouse.com).

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## Suggested Interview Questions

1. What led you to write *Healing Hearts*?
2. How did Psalm 46:10, “Be still and know that I am God,” change the way you practiced medicine?
3. How do you think human arrogance between doctors and patients gets in the way of healing?
4. How did these eight mothers help you through the loss of your own son?
5. Why do you think it’s been so important for these parents to serve in the place that was once a source of pain for them?
6. What do you think your son would say about this book?

## Contributor Bios

Linda Ojeda Balcioglu’s 2-year-old son Raymond nearly drowned in the backyard swimming pool, and passed away a month later. She turned to alcohol to cope, but eventually turned her life around, working in the same hospital where her son died. Linda helped establish the Translation Department at Children’s Medical Center of Dallas.

Linda Simpkins’ son AJ was born with a heart defect. He underwent several serious surgeries, but shortly after his fifth birthday AJ passed away. Nine years after his death Linda started volunteering at Children’s Medical Center, eventually becoming a hospital employee and establishing a volunteer program in the ICU.

Julie Lackey Williams’ daughter Kimberly was born with a serious heart defect and at age three was given six months to live. Kimberly went on to achieve her goal of attending kindergarten, but passed away shortly after. Her mom decided to pursue nursing and even worked on the same floor of Children’s Medical Center of Dallas where Kimberly spent much of her short life.

Karen Ellis’ son Phillip was born with Down Syndrome and a heart defect. While many doctors dismissed Phillip, Dr. Nikaidoh gladly accepted him as a patient. Over the course of his life Philip had chemotherapy for leukemia, six heart surgeries, eight heart catheterizations, reconstructive hip surgery and more than 300 dilations for his esophagus. Karen has been working at Children’s Medical Center since before Phillip’s death, helping the parents whose lives she understands so well.

Shanna Shields-Thomas’ baby Ethan was born with part of his heart missing. Two months after his death at age two, Shanna enrolled in nursing school. She spent time working at Children’s Medical Center, helping parents whose children have heart issues.

Marie Crowe knew on the 17th day of her baby Jackson’s life that he would never leave the hospital. Surgery to repair his deformed heart was not successful so she asked medical staff to let him go. In the years since his death Marie and her husband have supported Children’s Medical Center in every way possible, even sponsoring a beautiful sculpture in his honor.

Lynette Dick was told she couldn’t have children, but after lots of prayer miraculously became pregnant. Her baby Timothy seemed healthy, but wasn’t gaining weight. Doctors discovered Timothy had a defect that caused his heart to fail, which ultimately caused his death at just 14 weeks of age. Many years later Lynette accepted a position as the executive assistant to the president and CEO of Children’s.

Liz Etkorn took her newborn Brooke to the pediatrician for what she thought was a cold. Just a few hours later Dr. Nikaidoh was operating on the baby to repair serious heart defects. Brooke passed away and several gut-wrenching years later Liz went to nursing school. She now works as director of a hospice program, serving others at the end of their lives.

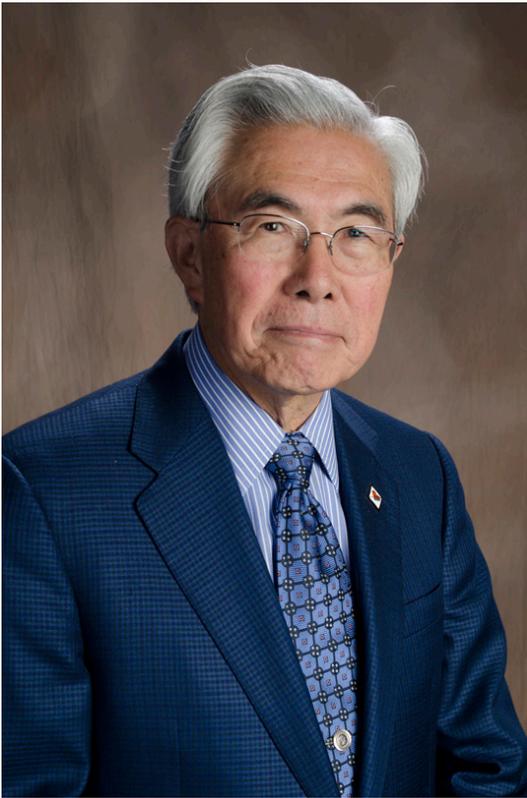


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## DR. HISASHI NIKAI DOH



Dr. Hisashi Nikaidoh, Director of Children's Hospital at Saint Francis in Tulsa, OK, earned his medical degree from The University of Tokyo in 1959 and trained at Mount Sinai Hospital, New York City; Children's Memorial Hospital, Chicago; and Case Western Reserve University Hospital, Cleveland. Dr. Nikaidoh is internationally known for the innovative surgical procedure that carries his name and his lifelong dedication to the care of children, for which he received the Children's Miracle Achievement Award in 2011. In addition, Dr. Nikaidoh has been a long-time teacher of the Gospel and served on multiple missions, domestic and abroad.

### Connect with Hisashi

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