

This Christmas, become a Smile Donor and transform a life by giving a 'Gift for Life'.



Message from Chair

Because of your generosity and support, since July this year, in just four months 546 children have undergone life changing free surgery. This festive, Christmas celebration time is a great opportunity to 'Gift a Smile' to a child and their deeply appreciative mum, dad and extended family. For just \$300 Aussie you can gift a child a smile for life.

Unfortunately, in Bangladesh still, many of the remote rural communities still blame the mum and/or the dad for a child born with a cleft lip or palate – how tough would that be!

When I was a small boy, Christmas was all about getting despite my parents' best efforts to teach me something else! We all grow up though, many of us with our own children and families, what we learn and experience is that deep fulfillment, satisfaction and purpose so often happen when we

give, not get - particularly when we know that gift changes a life and makes such a huge difference to a child and their family. Thanks so much for your generous support and interest in Operation Cleft over this past year, this project now 14 years old has provided a new life and hope for more than 12,000 children.

Thanks so much for helping to make that possible. Enjoy the real-life stories and news in this Summer/Christmas Newsletter.

We wish you and your family Seasons greetings, a very happy Christmas and successful New Year.



Chair, Bruce McEwen

Toiong Marma's new start in life..

Toiong Marma came to LMRF Children Hospital Chittagong, in March 2019. She was born in Bandarban district with a cleft lip as well as palate, shocking her parents, Matui and Singnu Marma. No one in their family had this type of deformity before and this event distressed them. People around their area left oblique remarks to them and made them believe that Toiong got the cleft deformity because her mother Mrs. Matui did fish scaling during lunar eclipse while she was in her womb. Others believe in rebirth and believed that Toiong did some misdeed in her first birth and got the deformity as a punishment in her next birth.

They are from Marma tribe, one of the big ethnic groups in the country. Bandarban Hill Track is around 60 kilometres away from Chittagong. In hill track areas the living standard is low.

People have to live without electricity, the communication system is very rough, and people still lead a primitive life style. A few families can afford solar electricity. Most of the people from hill track areas do not have an idea about life outside the area. As Toiong's father said "I have never been in Chittagong city in my life before, I came here for my child's treatment".

Mr. Singnu and Mrs. Matui make their living through "Jhum" cultivation, growing crops in hill slopes, which yields very limited harvests. Selling Jhum crops, they earn 20-25 thousand taka (less than 400 AUS Dollars) yearly. So they cannot afford cleft surgery for their child. "We wanted to have a correction of the deformity since her birth, but we could not afford the cost", Mrs Matui Marma said.



An uncle who knew about free surgery and Cleft Bangladesh's weekly camps at LMRF Children hospital gave them information about the center. At the first visit to the camp, Toiong got cleft lip surgery, and on 2nd July, 2019 she got her cleft palate surgery. Toiong's family are very happy with the correction and want to work as agents for changing lives of cleft children around their locality.

Toiong will come to the center for a follow up after three months. We hope all will be well with her and she will have a happy life.

Generous support received from the Michael Parker Foundation

OCA Inc. Chair Bruce McEwen was recently invited to address the Board of The Michael Parker Foundation to share the Operation Cleft Story. Bruce McEwen thanked Bruce Parker, chair of MPF for the generous donation received recently in July. Bruce Parker indicated that MPF would continue to provide on-going support for OCA's free surgical services needed for the Cleft suffering children of Bangladesh.

The Michael Parker Foundation recognizes that children who have received cleft corrective surgery are then able to attend school and enjoy the profound benefits that a full and normal education will provide. The Michael Parker Foundation was established to honor the memory of Melbourne based Mick Parker (Bruce and Gail Parker's son) - a 15-year experienced mountaineer, a veteran

of the '8000ers Club'. This Club is made up of those adventurers who have scaled the world's tallest mountains, in Mick's case 9 out of the top 14 without bottled oxygen or assistance (Sherpa) support. Michael died in 2009 at age 36, 13 days after successfully climbing Makalu (8463 meters) in the Himalaya's.

The purpose of the MPF is to assist provide education and to help ease the hardship of disadvantaged children and village families in Michael's favourite locations, Nepal and Northern Pakistan – and beyond!

MPF recognizes a close alignment with the purpose of Operation Cleft and the value of providing free surgery and following corrective surgery, the opportunity for thousands of poor and disadvantaged cleft suffering children to attend normal school. Through school they learn

and experience the values of education and the possibilities that education provides to break the poverty cycle and bring hope and a future not just for themselves, but also their families and communities.

Operation Cleft Australia is deeply appreciative of the support and financial partnership received and promised from the Michael Parker Foundation.



Director, Trudy Brentnall of Michael Parker Foundation presenting the book 'Spirit High' to OCA Chair, Bruce McEwen.

We thank the following Rotary Clubs for supporting OCA over the years donating a compound total of \$10,000 and above!

Rotary Club of Box Hill Central
Rotary Club of Bendigo
Rotary Club of Crows Nest
Rotary Club of Woodend
Rotary Club of Pambula
Rotary Club of Hoppers Crossing
Rotary Club of Ferntree Gully

Rotary Club of Ross River
Rotary Club of Hall
Rotary Club of Hampton
Rotary Club of Gawler
Rotary Club of Brighton. Vic
Rotary Club of Ballarat South
Rotary Club of Currumbin-Coolangatta Tweed Inc

Rotary Club of Bentleigh Moorabbin Central
Rotary Club of Preston
Rotary Club of Mont Albert & Surrey Hills
Rotary Club of Melbourne
Rotary Club of Warrnambool Central
Rotary Club of Bendigo—Strathdale

Thanks to following Media

We are acknowledging and thanking the following radio stations and Newspaper for giving us the opportunity to share our story about achieving more than 12,000 operations on their media outlets this October.



THE Senior

For \$25 per month for a year, you can provide a free cleft lip /palate operation to an underprivileged child in Bangladesh. AUD \$300 is all that it costs to transform a life and give a chance for a better future!

Leave a Lasting Legacy

“Operation Cleft” has changed the lives of more than 12,000 children in Bangladesh since it started in 2005. By providing these children with the opportunity to have the cleft repair surgery they need, we are not just giving them a smile, we are giving them a happy future.

Leaving a bequest is an extraordinary act of generosity and kindness. By remembering “Operation Cleft” in your will, you are contributing to Operation Cleft’s vision for the poor and underprivileged in Bangladesh born with cleft defects – gifting them a “Smile for Life.”

‘A Bequest’ is an investment in changing children’s lives for a Lifetime!

A truly incredible act, a bequest to “Operation Cleft” is a gift that gives a life-changing opportunity and helps Rotary’s work live on. We very much appreciate your thinking about us for a potential bequest for more information correct words to use or if you would like to discuss any aspect of leaving a bequest to “Operation Cleft” and how much it will help our project, please contact our office on 03 9877 9717 or send us an email to info@operationcleft.org.au.

Thanks for considering this very special investment, this is much appreciated.

Bentleigh Secondary College Spellathon 2019

In Dr Intha Chetty's words...

Our 10th Spellathon

Well what a great event. The library was buzzing like bees. The 10th Spella-thon was simply marvellous with nearly 100 participants. The audience was appreciative and boisterous with their cheering for this essential component of learning. Spelling and its role in literacy development is the art of correctly sequencing letters to form words and is one of the essential components of successful writing, and ability in spelling leads to confidence in all aspects of literacy. The ability to recognise the links between words of the same origin and understanding word relationships is proven to aid comprehension skills. Thank you and congratulations to participants who rose to the challenge with bravo.

Thanks to Mr Marc Koenig (Professor Thesaurus), Mrs Christine Rowe (Professor Rowsaurus) and Mrs Denise Yannios for their excellent presentation of the words; Ms Robyn Zienow for setting up the library and her diligence in packaging all the kits for the spelling bee; and Mrs Deborah Muller for checking spelling and monitoring students. The ongoing sponsorship of the Spellathon by Moorabbin Rotary Club is greatly appreciated. We have raised approximately \$1364.00 for Operation Cleft to further assist with life-saving and dignity restoring operations for babies born with cleft lips and or palates. Our gratitude to all for your wonderful effort in making the 10th Spellathon a resounding success.

Dr Intha Chetty Teacher,
Paul Harris Fellow & Mindfulness Meditation Coordinator



Smile Donor Champion Vidun!



Vidun from **Burwood East Primary** worked hard to bring awareness about OCA to his peers and the school community. Vidun's initiative helped the school raise \$300 which will help provide a child in Bangladesh with the opportunity to receive life-altering, free cleft lip and cleft palate surgery so that they also have a smile for life.

Welcome to our new school Smile Donor McKinnon Secondary College!

In June 2019, with the generous support of Rotary Club of Moorabbin, McKinnon Secondary College organized a Spelling Bee to raise funds to support Operation Cleft Australia. The event was well organized and enjoyed by the students and staff alike and raised \$ \$3780. 70..! That's 12 operations!!



Looking for Christmas gift ideas?

Raise funds for Operation Cleft when you buy this amazing South Australian

ADELAIDE HILLS SOUTH AUSTRALIAN SAUVIGNON BLANC 2018

Made from a blend of Adelaide Hills and various South Australian wine growing region, it has intense flavours of tropical fruit, a medium sweet palate and a well-balanced acid finish. 12.5% alc/vol, approx. 7.4 standard drinks. contains sulphites, may contain traces of milk product.

Buy 12 for **\$144.00** + Special Delivery rate \$6.00 per carton Australia Wide

Call **Prospect Wines** to place the order by quoting 'Operation Cleft Fundraiser'
(03) 9877 1499 or email: blackburn@prospectwines.com.au



