



Operation Cleft Australia is an international project of the Rotary Club of Box Hill Central Inc. District 9810 Australia



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## Smiles Update

### Newsletter - May/June 2021

### Be a smile Donor today!

*Please make your tax-deductible donation before June 30th*



### Message from the Chair

It is often said it's in the tough and difficult times that we do our best learning, growing, and achieving! As you well know it has been a very difficult time for our friends in Bangladesh, India and all South Asia generally. The pandemic continues to wreak havoc with increased infection rates and an ever-increasing death toll. Bangladesh is presently in another national lockdown.

Despite the most difficult year imaginable, our stoic, hardworking cleft surgeons and partner hospitals have continued to do everything within their power to perform surgeries. Together they have provided a hope and a new beginning for more than 1,350 Cleft suffering children. All in just the last 10 months! This of course is bringing unbelievable joy to their Mums, Dads, and broader families. Dr Zaman, one of our senior surgeons, contracted Covid 19 in early April. Now I'm pleased to report, with good care, he is recovering well.

As friends and partners of Operation Cleft Australia I thank you for your interest, commitment, and on-going generous support. Also, a big thank you to the multitude of Rotary Clubs who, despite the issue of lockdowns and restrictions on many fundraising activities, have continued to support what we all appreciate as a very effective Australian Rotary Club initiated and managed program. We are also thankful for the generous support received from Businesses, Family trusts and other private organisations.

Together with our partner we have now completed more than 15,000 free surgeries in our 15 years of working in Bangladesh; what a difference that has made!

Your tax deductible donation will help transform the lives of many of this world's poorest and most disadvantaged children. With your support these children receive a new hope and a future, they can now go to school, feel accepted amongst their friends and family, enjoy a freedom from debilitating infections, enjoy good health and life - and what brings joy to all of us; they receive as a gift, the ability to SMILE!

Please enjoy the attached life changing stories in this winter (pre-tax) newsletter.

Thank you  
Chair, Bruce McEwen



**Giving monthly — Transform a life this year!**  
For only \$30 per month, you can provide a corrective surgery to a disadvantaged child born with a cleft lip/palate in Bangladesh.

**Transforming lives... One smile at a time..**

## **Our tiny patients at their follow-up appointments**



### **SPOTLIGHT— Surgeon Profile**

Dr. Mohammad Quamruzzaman

Prof. Muhammad Quamruzzaman is a leading burn, plastic, and reconstructive surgeon in Bangladesh. He has been performing cleft lip, palate, cancer reconstruction, and other reconstructive surgeries. Professor Zaman started his plastic surgery career in 1999 and started working with Operation Cleft project since its inception in Bangladesh, as an Assistant Plastic surgeon with renowned plastic surgeon Prof. Dr. Shafquat Hussain Khundkar. After consecutive 3 years' intensive working experience with Prof. Khandakar, Dr. Zaman started working independently with Operation Cleft as a Principal Surgeon. In 2009, since day one of DCKH's journey in Bangladesh to present date, Prof. Zaman has been working with us and performing 700-900 surgeries per year.

Dr. Quamruzzaman is a Professor and Head of Burn Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery in Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College, Bangladesh. He completed MBBS, FCPS, and MS in Plastic Surgery. He took special training in plastic and microsurgeries, both home and abroad like India, the USA, and the Netherlands. Since the year 2000, he is extremely engaged in the management of cleft lip, cleft palate and, other facial clefts. He has also been invited multiple times to the Philippines, Vietnam and, India to operate cleft surgeries. Professor Zaman has been passionate about every stitch he makes in bringing smiles to the cleft children in Bangladesh. We are proud to have him in our team. While we were writing this story, Dr. Zaman quoted, "In my lifetime I accomplished around 9000 surgeries and every single surgery was important for me".





## Hope during global pandemic hard times

Just after his 1st birthday in October 2019, Abir was operated to correct the cleft lip and palate. Abir needed a second surgery due to his severe lip palate. Unfortunately the global pandemic hit Bangladesh hard and Abir missed out for few months making his parents so desperate since he had issues breathing, feeding and swallowing. Day-to-day challenges were they faced were added by further difficulties due to the Covid-19 situation. We received the update that Abir's parents were asked to bring him to the hospital for the second operation and the family is thrilled to have Abir back at home healthy, all looking forward to his bright smile and future.

## Promoting safety at Camps during Covid-19

Covid-19 awareness sessions are conducted in every camp to dispel misinformation about the corona virus, raise public awareness and promoting precautionary

measures. Hygiene kits are also distributed as token of gifts from Cleft Bangladesh after the awareness sessions.



## School Spellathons are back in 2021!



2020 was a challenging year for all. COVID-19 made some of us work from home, and kids study from home. Children missed many opportunities of engagements at school and friends. Just as Sports, Music, Drama and other curricular activities at school, children also missed out on opportunities of giving back to the communities and to the under-privileged via school run events.



This year, OCA's supporters such as Bentleigh Secondary College, McKinnon College are getting ready to hold their Spellathons to support Operation Cleft Australia in our mission to provide 1500 operations per year!

OCA warmly welcome these school communities and thank them for their unwavering support!



## Birthday Blessings

You can fundraise for Operation Cleft via your social media page.

It is safe to say that most of us access our social media safely to connect with friends, family, co-workers, neighbours, and that guy from high school Science class. In addition to personal connections, we use social media to support businesses, pages, brands and causes we care about.

Social media has transformed online fundraising and it is becoming a popular way to raise funds for your favourite charity by creating your own campaign; just as other crowd-funding platforms.

For your birthday or anniversary this year, we hope you will consider using this safe technology to raise funds for Operation Cleft Australia.

Please call us on 03 9877 9717 or email us on [info@operationcleft.org.au](mailto:info@operationcleft.org.au) when you are ready to plan your OCA fundraiser on Facebook.



