



NEWSLETTER

S U M M E R - 2 0 2 1

Message from Chair

To the 'Smile-makers' we say a huge thank you. It's been a different and difficult year for all of us with lockdowns, isolation, and uncertainty. But now it's time for hope and optimism. I very much like this year's Rotary International theme of **"Serve to change lives"**.

Operational Cleft Australia is proud to partner with you and others to do exactly that; to make a difference - to change lives even in and through the toughest of times! The challenges encountered over this last year in providing life-changing surgery for the youngest, poorest most vulnerable cleft suffering children across needy Bangladesh has been huge. Yet despite Covid-19 we together have succeeded in providing more than 1,600 life changing surgeries in this last 2020/2021 year.

This outcome was and is only possible firstly because of the 'Service beyond self' commitment of our surgeons, team, and partners in Bangladesh (I encourage you to read the story later in this Newsletter from senior Surgeon Prof. Siddiky). Even with Prof. Quamruzaman coming down with Covid, each of our Surgeons have so often put aside their own interests, needs and at times safety, and put first the needs of our Cleft affected children and their deeply appreciative families.

Secondly, I thank you, our 'smile maker' family. How unselfish you our Australian based donors have been, your faithful, generous continuing support even when so many of you were also facing loss and the unknown to help children you will most likely never meet in a very different country, a long distance away. This is amazing, I cannot thank you enough.

You are the 'smile makers' our real-world heroes, giving Bangladeshi babies and so many very young children the capacity to smile, and to grow with the opportunity to live life with hope, an education, a future and all with a lifelong dignity.

We cheer together the accomplishments of the year.

You have helped play your part in bringing together the miraculous, life changing stories of Cleft Bangladesh.

Enjoy a wonderful Christmas, a much-deserved break, and a really positive New Year.

Thank you.

Bruce McEwen

Chair , Operation Cleft Australia Foundation

THANK YOU & HAPPY CHRISTMAS

On behalf of OCA Management in Australia, our Surgeons, Partner NGO and most importantly, Parents and Children in Bangladesh;

We would like to thank you for your wholehearted support for the last 16 years. and

We wish you and your extended family a

*Happy Christmas and
Healthy New Year 2022.*





“Giving back” Can add so much meaning to a surgeon’s life.

Dr. Sayeed Ahmed Siddiky

There is nothing more rewarding than working for disadvantaged children. Bangladesh is a country of 170 million people. The population density is overwhelming. Rivers and canals that flow south into the Bay of Bengal crisscross this country.

The remotest parts of the country rest with no electricity and no adequate infrastructure. Babies born with congenital birth deformities, eg: cleft lip and cleft palate in these lonely islands, do not have access to surgery. I am privileged to extend assistance to those isolated communities. I, along with my team, travel from one island to another in a floating hospital. With the support of Cleft Bangladesh, I bring medical facilities to the doorsteps of these underprivileged communities.

I am involved in regular cleft camps in major city hospitals for many years now. Working in floating hospital is very different. As winter approaches, the hospital floats upstream and anchors at different islands, treating a new group of people. During each visit, I stay in the floating hospital for an average of three days operating on cleft babies.

My team members include an anaesthetist, a nurse, and a documentation assistant. The medical officer on board in the floating hospital does the preliminary screening of cleft babies. I check on the details, including the photographs of the patients a few days before I arrive. I do a final screening just after we arrive. Usually, we select simple low-risk patients for the ensuing 2 days’ camp. For complex and difficult cases, I bring them to my centre in Dhaka so that I can perform their surgeries safely.;

Thanks to Operation Cleft Australia and DCKH for providing me with the means to undertake such a humanitarian effort. I would also like to thank the NGO ‘Friendship’ for running the floating hospitals and organising cleft camps at regular intervals. As much as I love to practice aesthetic plastic surgery in my city hospital, I love to go out to these remote island communities as frequently as I can to serve them. I now realise that “giving back” can add so much meaning to a surgeon’s life.

Prof. Sayeed Ahmed Siddiky (FCPS, FRCS, FACS) is an experienced and energetic Plastic and Aesthetic surgeon based in Bangladesh. We are lucky to have him in our team as a Surgeon. Dr Siddiky shared his experience working with us and his feelings on supporting with disadvantaged communities of Bangladesh.



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.

You can donate safely online following the link below:

<https://www.operationcleft.org.au/online-donation-widget/>





Photograph: Rosemary and Rotarian Russell from RC Orange Daybreak after presentation in March 2021



Rosemary Castle is one of our new ambassadors from the Rotary Club of Woden Daybreak, District 9705, Australia. Since day one, Rosemary has been passionate about Operation Cleft and working wholeheartedly in her district for raising public awareness about cleft, and raising funds for underprivileged cleft children in Bangladesh.

As an ambassador, to date Rosemary presented to 8 Rotary clubs and more on the list. We are so lucky and thankful to have Rosemary as an ambassador.

We need more kind hearted soul like Rosemary. If you are interested in being a part of this noble cause, please reach us:

info@operationcleft.org.au

Meet our Ambassador Rosemary Castle

As a newish ambassador for Operation Cleft, I can't think of any other voluntary work I'd rather do.

As I say at the start of every talk, I'm absolutely passionate about the program for four reasons: its utter transformation of children's lives; its medical training element; its cost effectiveness (\$350 per surgery is amazing) and finally, the fact that it shows what Rotary can achieve when it identifies a problem and sets out to fix it.

Lockdown has proved perfect for reaching out to Rotary Clubs in my District (9705) which covers the ACT and a large swathe of NSW. It would take a day's travel to reach some clubs but the widespread adoption of Zoom has made it much easier. I am also lucky because many Clubs in my District are long-time supporters and are keen to stay up to date. I love all their probing, detailed questions. Thanks to the Melbourne team for patiently providing me with answers.

I would love to be in touch with other ambassadors and to share ideas. My email is rosemarycastle@hotmail.com if anyone would like to chat.

Despite all the recent challenges, it's marvellous that Operation Cleft continues steadily on. Kudos to everyone involved and thank you for the opportunity to be a tiny part of it.

Hasan is free from Cleft deformity



When Hasan was born with a cleft, I was afraid of social taboos, superstitions and rejection. I did not share with anyone when Hasan was born until I got the date of cleft surgery. At 3 months, Hasan got his cleft surgery at Lion Mukhlesur Rahman Children's Hospital, Chattagram. My son is growing up, he has a bright smile now which makes our day. One day he will be a wonderful role model for other kids with cleft lip and palate. I love watching him grow and foreseeing the man he will become. I want him to be a religious leader.

From Md. Harun, Hasan's Father



Gift a smile for life by gifting a card to your loved ones...

We recently started 'OCA Gift Cards' - a new way of giving to the cleft children in Bangladesh. If you need a present for someone who cares about disadvantaged cleft children to the poorest part of the world, who doesn't have adequate access to treatment, there's no better choice. Not only does the recipient get a beautiful card, but together you make a real contribution in transforming lives of cleft children in Bangladesh by **gifting a smile for life**. Every Operation Cleft card will help transform the lives of children born with congenital cleft lip/palate in Bangladesh.

Please collect your card from the link below:
<https://www.operationcleft.org.au/shop/>



Leave a Legacy...

Leaving a legacy means putting a stamp on the future and contributing to future generations. People want to leave a legacy because they want to feel that their life mattered. You will live your life as if you matter.

You can leave a legacy through bringing smiles to the underprivileged cleft children in Bangladesh who need a surgery to get their clefts repaired.

To include Operation Cleft in your will, we suggest the following wording for consideration by your Solicitor:

"I bequeath the sum of \$..... (or portion of my estate or description of property) to The Trustee for Operation Cleft Australia Foundation for its general purposes free of all duties. I declare that the receipt from an authorised officer of the organisation shall be a complete and sufficient discharge for the executor (s)".

"It is not necessarily the length of our life that determines our legacy, it is more the length of the shadow of our influence that defines what legacy we leave behind."



