



Newsletter



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

Message from our 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.

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

Bruce McEwen, Chair.

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. Banderban 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 centre. 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 centre 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 honour 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.

In the picture: 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 Ross River
Rotary Club of Bentleigh Moorabbin Central
Rotary Club of Hall
Rotary Club of Preston
Rotary Club of Crows Nest
Rotary Club of Hampton
Rotary Club of Mont Albert & Surrey Hills
Rotary Club of Ferntree Gully

Rotary Club of Woodend
Rotary Club of Gawler
Rotary Club of Melbourne
Rotary Club of Pambula
Rotary Club of Brighton. Vic
Rotary Club of Warrnambool Central
Rotary Club of Hoppers Crossing
Rotary Club of Ballarat South
Rotary Club of Bendigo—Strathdale
Rotary Club of Currumbin-Coolangatta Tweed Inc

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 Spellathon 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.



Thanks to our Media Supporters



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.

Looking for Christmas Gift ideas?

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

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. For every case sold Operation Cleft will make \$40.00 per dozen

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



Have you ever wondered how much is needed to positively change a child's life?

With OCA, it is only AUD \$300 that is needed to transform a child's life overnight with a corrective cleft lip/palate surgery...

**This Christmas, please consider
'Gifting a Smile for Life'!**



Please click here to Donate today!

You can donate online or send a donation directly to our bank account

The Account Name: Operation Cleft Australia Inc.

Bendigo Bank

BSB 633 000 Account Number 165 147 935

(Please add your name as the reference and e-mail your name and address to info@operationcleft.org.au so that we can provide you with a tax receipt.)

You can donate with PayPal too!



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