International Children's Surgical Foundation

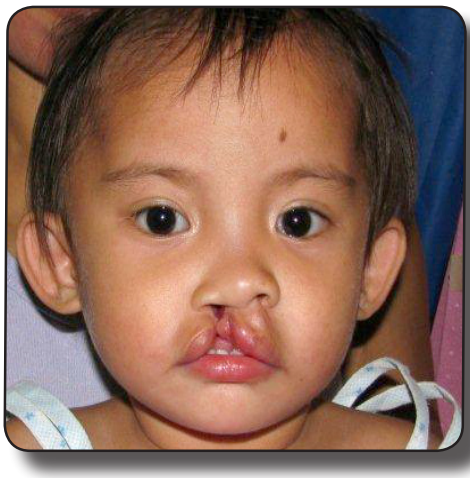
"Everyone Was Born to Smile"

Volume 7 No. 2

ICSF to Serve 16 Missions in 2012 — including 7 in the Philippines

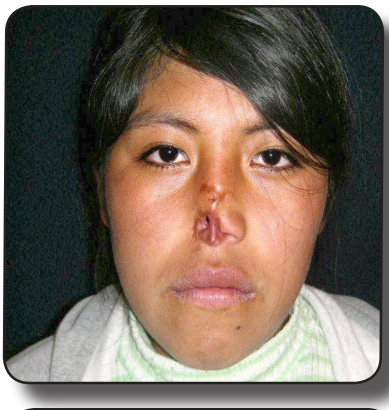
Like usual, the first quarter of 2012 saw ICSF off to a running start — in spite of ICSF's head of home operations, Beverly Williams, undergoing major shoulder joint replacement surgery. In January through March, ICSF served five missions to the countries of Mexico, Bolivia, and the Philippines, providing free surgery to 91 children and young adults suffering from congenital and traumatic deformities. A total of 16 missions are planned for the year, with seven in the Philippines.

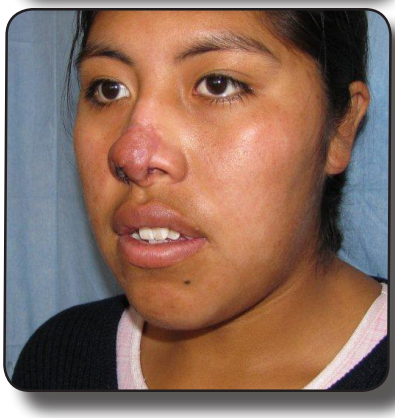
Angel, of Oaxaca, Mexico, before surgery (below, top) and four months after surgery (below, bottom).



Maesy, of the Philippines, before surgery (above), and one year after surgery (below).

17-year-old Marina (below, top) of Bolivia, who lost part of her nose from a dog bite at age three, and five days after the last of four surgeries (below, bottom).





THE SPECIAL CASE OF BEN SONGAHID

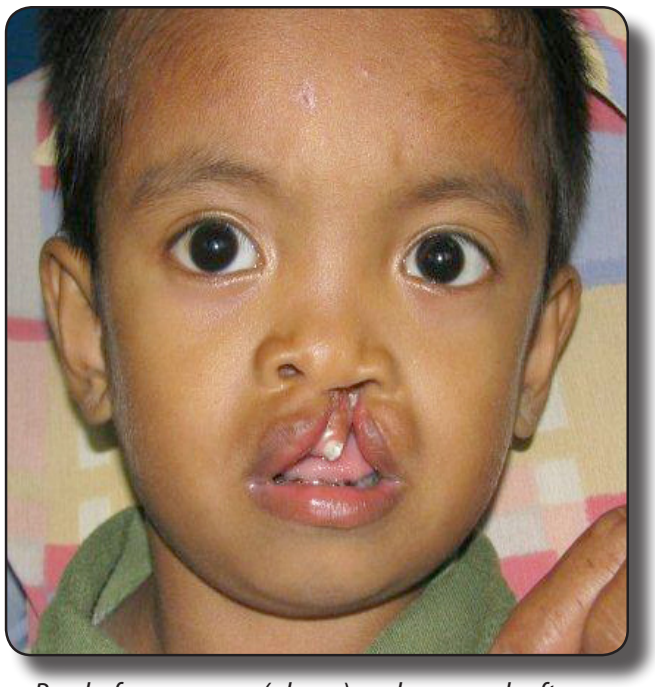
When Ben Songahid, age seven, came to ICSF's 2011 Kabankalan Philippines mission, he was very thin, like many other Filipino children. More importantly, however, Ben was found to be severely anemic, necessitating cancellation of his surgery.

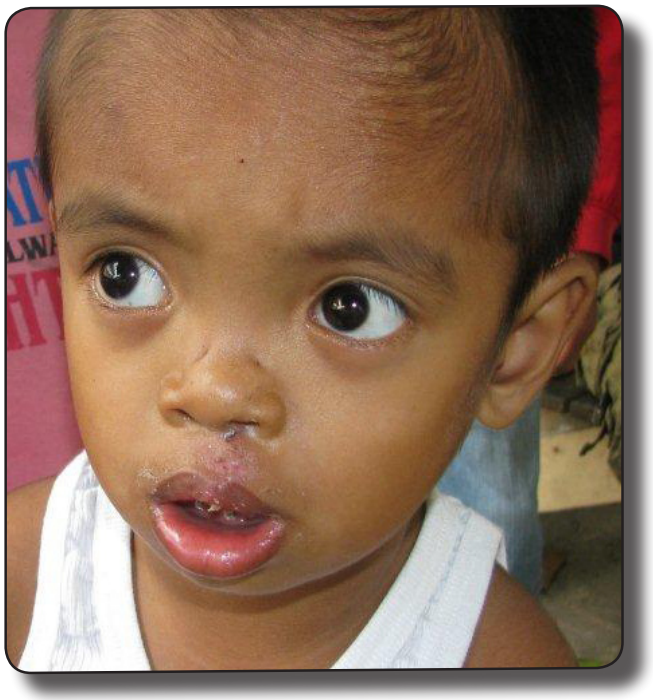
"Many other mission groups would have simply told Ben's mother that he had poor nutrition and sent them away. I have seen this sad scenario first-hand many, many times in my former work with various medical teams", says Dr. Geoff Williams, president of ICSF.

"One could look at Ben's mother, who was even thinner than Ben, and I could see that this family did not have the means to give Ben significant supplemental nutrition", he adds.

As ICSF has done with other similar patients, however, Ben was given a nutrition regimen to improve his anemia and get him ready for surgery. "ICSF is the only volunteer medical organization that does this — Ben is one reason that an organization like ICSF was needed in the world", adds Dr. Williams.

By February 2012, Ben was less thin and had an acceptable blood count. "After the surgery, Ben's mother was all smiles. Now Ben can go to school and get on with his life — thanks to our very unique donors", adds Dr. Williams.





Ben before surgery (above) and one week after surgery (below).

Everyone Was Born to Smile!

ICSF does its life-changing work thanks to the involvement and generosity of our many volunteers and donors. Our donors include school children, church groups, teachers, retirees, members of the military — and can include you. Donations of any amount make a difference. Contact us at ICSF, P.O. Box 4594, Boise, Idaho 83711-4594, (208) 375-8132.

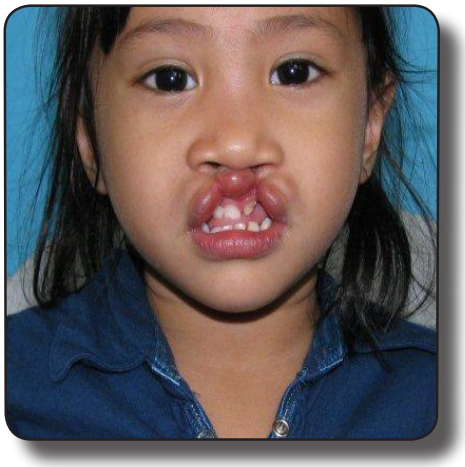
MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Jowena's Time

It certainly was ***not*** Jowena's time in January, 2009. Jowena's mother had brought her to ICSF's annual Kabankalan, Philippines, cleft palate mission, hoping to have her daughter's bilateral cleft lip corrected. The one-year-old little girl had come to the mission healthy, but when her scheduled day for surgery arrived, she had a high fever and a deep cough, necessitating the cancellation of her surgery. Jowena's beautiful mother received the bad news politely. Her quiet reply, however, "OK, Doc, I understand," could not hide her disappointment. Although her daughter was only one year old she could not be comforted with the news "You'll be taken care of next year."

Many children in similar circumstances wait until next year — but next year never comes. This was Jowena's mother's concern. All she could see was her daughter being taunted, teased, and ostracized as she entered school with her unrepaired bilateral cleft lip. What Jowena's mother did *not* fully understand was that she was now under the care of a very unique organization. She did not know that ICSF would track her down the following year to make sure that the lip was repaired. All she knew was that many organizations do not return to the same location.

Jowena's mother was surprised when she received a phone call early the next year from ICSF coordinator Flor Moya asking her to bring her daughter to the upcoming ICSF mission. At the 2010 mission, however, devastating news came yet again. Jowena once more had a significant respiratory infection, and her surgery could not be scheduled. This time, however, the young mother received the news with a smile. She knew, and had heard from other mothers, that ICSF is different from the other groups that come through. Only one month later, nurse Moya called with the good news, asking that Jowena be brought to another nearby ICSF mission. Room for Jowena had been made on the schedule!



Jowena at age three, prior to surgery (above), and after surgery (below).

By the time the mission date had arrived, I had come to know Jowena very well. On the first day, I scanned the waiting crowd. "There she is!" I said to myself. I was relieved but not surprised that Jowena and her mother were there waiting.

As the mother and daughter walked, hand-in hand, into the screening room and over to my desk, my beaming smile faded as they came close. I couldn't believe what I saw. Jowena had a purulent infection on the left margin of her cleft lip! I breathed a long sigh as I looked at the infection under magnification. It had started two days before, according to her mother. Again, I had to deliver the bad news. Jowena would have to wait — again. Thankfully, the mother received the news with confidence. She had come to know that her daughter was on ICSF's radar screen and that her daughter's "time" would come. Finally, in March 2011, Jowena came — completely healthy!

(*Continued on page 4*)

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT (CONTINUED)

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She was scheduled on one of the first days of the mission to make sure that an infection didn't creep in as had happened three times before. Jowena's time had finally come! She and her mother were both tearful when they said good-by to each other as she was carried by Dr. Kevin Kartchner into the operating room. Dr, Kartchner also had come to know Jowena well. One would have thought he was carrying his own daughter to the operating room judging by the way he cradled her in his arms.

All went well, and after a four-hour surgery the sleeping little girl was delivered back into the arms of her mother. Jowena's mother gave profuse thanks and shed tears of joy. She may have felt lucky or blessed to find an organization like ICSF, an organization that has a radar screen for its patients in some of the poorest countries of the world.

Thank you, our donors, for making it possible to finally perform Jowena's surgery, with all the care and time that similar children receive in America and other developed countries. "Everyone," indeed, "was born to smile."

Dr. Geoff Williams

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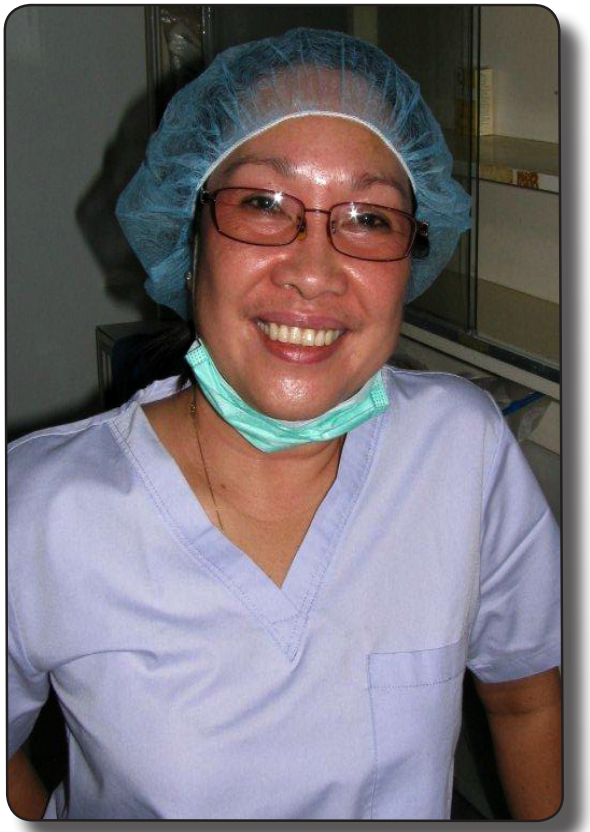
Impossible without Her!

How is it possible for an organization with no paid employees to do seven team missions per year in a poor country 10,000 miles away?

The answer: Meet Flor Moya, retired registered nurse (the Philippines) who donates her efforts nearly full-time, organizing and coordinating ICSF's missions in the Philippines and Vietnam.

Dr. Williams first met Flor in 2007 when they were both volunteering with another team in the Philippines. They had certain ideas of how surgical missions should be conducted — and those ideas matched up well. Before they knew it, they were serving together on ICSF's first team mission to the Philippines in 2008.

"Flor has made the impossible, possible", states Dr. Williams. Flor now serves as ICSF's Mission Coordinator for all of Southeast Asia and has served 21 ICSF missions to Kenya, Vietnam, and the Philippines. ICSF's hat goes off to Flor for her valuable service.



Flor Moya, Registered Filipino nurse and ICSF Southeast Asia Mission Coordinator