



INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S SURGICAL FOUNDATION

"Everyone Was Born to Smile"

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January-March, ICSF's busiest quarter to date

One-hundred-five surgeries in four missions (three missions to the Philippines alone) were performed in the first three months of 2013 by the ICSF surgical team.

"A strange phenomenon has been occurring," says Dr. Geoff Williams, ICSF president. "In Kabankalan, we have been seeing larger numbers of kids every year. In February we had ninety-nine come. This was far more than we could treat in the February mission. As soon as we saw the size of the crowd, we went to the hospital director's office and asked if we could schedule an impromptu follow-up mission in July—to which she agreed. So we went back

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11-year-old Mary Ann before surgery (left) and two weeks after surgery for severe bilateral cleft lip (below).



Jonel had had his cleft lip repaired previously by a large mission but with poor results (top left) One week after a redo operation by ICSF (left).



Busiest quarter to date

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to the crowd and began scheduling kids for the current mission. When that schedule was full we continued to give kids surgery dates for July. No one was turned away and, more importantly, no hurried surgeries were performed. Each child got the needed amount of time and the best care we could render."



Arbius before surgery (above) with his arm fused to his side as a result of a third-degree burn from a bed fire, and three weeks after six-hour surgery by ICSF (right). Arbius's surgery was initially problematic owing to the large area of the reconstruction that would need to be covered by a skin graft. The harvesting of such a graft, from Arbius' leg would necessitate a \$7,000 piece of equipment known as an electric dermatome, which ICSF did not possess when Arbius initially came to the ICSF team in 2011. Dr. Williams, however, was able to find a very generous representative for the Zimmer company, Dan Twotigers, and the dermatome was donated to ICSF.



Dr. Carnes

Physician joins ICSF Board

Dr. Joyce Carnes, a Bend, Oregon, physician, has joined the ICSF Board of Directors. At ICSF's annual Board of Directors meeting in Medford, Oregon, on July 2, Dr. Carnes was unanimously voted in as a member of the board. She has a long record of service with ICSF, including three surgical missions to the Philippines and Peru.

An emergency physician in Bend, Dr. Carnes earned a medical degree from the University of New Mexico School of Medicine and has been practicing emergency medicine for decades. "Dr. Carnes has shown a great amount of interest in ICSF and its mission," states ICSF President Geoff Williams. "Most important of all, Joyce has a heart for the children we serve in the poor countries of the world. I'm thrilled that she has accepted the nomination," he adds.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Only the Brave

As I sat there in the Cebu, Philippines, pre-operative clinic I almost had to look away from the horribly deformed teenage girl sitting in front of me. My nineteen years of experience working with severely deformed children could not lessen the discomfort I felt as I looked at her. The beautiful name *Maria* did not match the face it belonged to, and yet the name was a testament to the love that her mother must have felt for Maria as an infant—even a horribly deformed infant.

For a few moments, the poor girl sitting in front of me was no more than another patient, until I heard someone behind me say, as if to break the silence, “She graduated from high school last week.” The words took a few moments to sink in, and then I realized what I had heard. “Really—she REALLY graduated from high school?” I said. “Yes,” the clinic helper replied, “just last week.”

I turned back again and looked into Maria’s face. I suddenly saw the horribly deformed face in a different light. I could only stare for a moment as I caught hold of what I had just heard. Into my mind came a vision of a young girl with severe, bilateral clefts of not only the mouth but also the nose and eyes, doggedly stepping into the school grounds day after day, year after year, encountering horrified stares, ridicule, and, likely, gasps of fright from other children. Over the ensuing few days I thought many times of Maria—each time gaining more respect for this unusual girl, who, in spite of a face that could barely claim a single normal structure, would persist in attending school through the years, to the point of high school graduation.



Maria with congenital bilateral clefts of the mouth, nose, and eyes, before surgery.

Prior to Maria’s surgery date, day after day I visited her in her hospital bed. Each time I entered her room she sat up and turned to me as if to remind me that she was there, looking forward to her long-awaited surgery. Maria had gone to other mission groups throughout her school years only to be told that her deformity was too severe for a visiting medical team to help. But one day a couple of months earlier a British expatriate living in Cebu met Maria and said he knew of an organization that would take her case. That organization was ICSF.

On the night before Maria’s surgery, as I entered her room, she again sat up as I entered. “Tomorrow is your day,” I said. Maria smiled with what little normal facial anatomy she

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

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Maria ten days after surgery.

had, which I took to mean, "I'm ready."

The day of Maria's surgery was a Saturday. The ICSF team had voted to give up their day off to do Maria's ten-hour surgery.

As Maria lay there anesthetized, special preparations for the marathon operation were carefully attended to. Special positioning and padding to avoid pressure ulcerations, a catheter to measure urine output, along with the other myriad monitoring devices for blood pressure, arterial oxygen saturation, carbon dioxide exchange efficiency, electrocardiogram, breathing rate, heart rate, and body temperature. As I approached Maria to make the initial surgical markings, I felt as if I were entering hallowed ground. I felt a guiding hand on my shoulder and a sense of unusual peace and calm as the incision was made. After eight

and a half hours of actual operating time Maria was carefully brought out of anesthesia. The ICSF team had performed flawlessly.

As Maria took her first unassisted breath—with her new face—I thought again of her unparalleled courage during the years of ridicule and scorn in the public schools, culminating in her high school graduation. It occurred to me that it was not only school that she had graduated from. She had graduated and passed the test that only the brave can pass. And finally as Maria was wheeled from the operating room, I thought of the people, far away, who had paid for Maria's surgery—ICSF's supporters. As I sat there in the now-vacated operating room, by myself, writing postoperative orders, I realized that it was all meant to come to pass. ICSF, our supporters and Maria, all united forever by the events of that Saturday.

Thank you, to our supporters. Thank you for your part in giving Maria her very fitting graduation present—a reward for her for her years of bravery, and thank you in advance for helping with her surgeries yet to come. 'Everyone, even Maria, Was Born to Smile'!

Dr. Geoff Williams

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