



# INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S SURGICAL FOUNDATION

*"Everyone Was Born to Smile"*

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## The Hanoi International Women's Club Awards Grant to ICSF

The Hanoi International Women's Club (HIWC) is composed of influential international women of high standing. Many are the wives of ambassadors or other officials from various countries, while others are successful businesswomen. One of the main interests of this women's group is to provide help to poor Vietnamese children. They were aware that many children living in Vietnam have correctable facial deformities and are in desperate need of help. "But which surgical organization should we help?" was the main question. The club's members were aware that many of the teams that come to operate do so in a very rapid fashion, performing many surgeries in a short period of time and then leaving the local people to handle surgical complications or healing problems.

Many teams seemed more interested in vacationing than in helping the local children. For these reasons the HIWC was immediately interested when they heard about the International Children's Surgical Foundation and its goals and values. They liked ICSF's standards of care, including taking lots of time and care with each child and then staying afterward to care for the children. Most of all, they were drawn to ICSF's goal of methodically teaching local doctors.

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*Cuong (Vietnam) before cleft lip surgery (left), and one week after (right).*

# Hanoi International Women's Club Awards Grant

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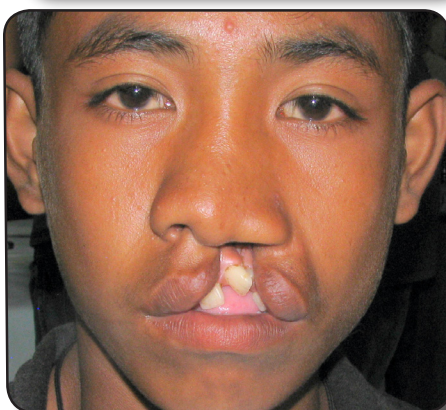
It was a natural consequence that the HIWC contacted ICSF about receiving a grant to perform cleft lip and palate surgery for Vietnamese children. Subsequently, after a formal application process, ICSF was awarded a grant of \$3,000 USD to cover a portion of in-hospital costs for ICSF's August cleft palate mission to the Hai Phong Children's Hospital.

"We feel honored that ICSF was singled out by this elite women's organization," says Dr. Geoff Williams, president of ICSF. "I think the more they learned about us, the more they realized that we care deeply about our little patients and their families and are committed to giving them the very best care possible."

Twenty-nine children received free, life-changing surgery at ICSF's annual Hai Phong Children's Hospital cleft palate mission August 10-25, with a sizable portion of the in-hospital costs funded by the HIWC grant. ICSF is scheduled to return to the Hai Phong Children's Hospital in March, 2016. And, yes, the HIWC is planning on helping again!

## ***ICSF Serves in the Philippines and Vietnam in Third Quarter***

There are no summer vacations at ICSF. July and August saw ICSF treat 58 children, all free of charge, in the countries of The Philippines and Vietnam, respectively. The July



*Ngoc before surgery (top, left) and two years after cleft lip surgery (top, right). Fifteen-year-old Reymart (above, left), Philippines, before surgery (left) and six months after surgery (right)*

mission to Kabankalan, Philippines was a follow-up mission to take care of left-over children who came to ICSF's February mission but could not be accommodated due to the extra-large turnout. "ICSF is the only, and I mean *the only*, mission organization that schedules follow-up missions to take care of all in need," comments Dr. Geoff Williams, ICSF president. "Many of our supporters donate to us on an ongoing basis for this reason, among others," he adds. The July Kabankalan mission also included an ICSF speech therapy team.



# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

## 'Not Poor Enough'

"You're not poor enough", explained the mission doctor. Eighteen-year-old Resty had a severe birth defect of his left lower eyelid and was starting to have some scarring of his cornea and loss of vision as a result. He also had a deformity of his upper lip and nose. He had gone to many free surgical missions for help but always had been given a reason why the mission could not perform his surgery.

The newest excuse, however, was baffling to Resty. He had explained to the mission doctor that he would never be able to afford to pay for surgery to save his vision, but again the same answer came: "You are *not* poor enough!" While it was true that Resty and his mother had sufficient food, shelter, and the other bare necessities, they were like many other Filipinos—they could not afford anything costly such as corrective surgery. One could only guess as to the real reason why Resty was denied the surgery he desperately needed.

Having been turned away so many times, Resty began to prepare psychologically for the loss of vision in his left eye, not to mention a lifetime of encountering stares when venturing into public. Nevertheless, he and his mother felt that they should keep trying to find a volunteer mission that would help.

It was with this reasoning in mind that Resty and his mother intrepidly came to the cleft palate mission at the Cadiz, Philippines, District Hospital. They had become familiar with the mission groups that came every year to the larger nearby city of Bacolod. Each of the groups had turned Resty away several times. It may have been for this reason that Resty and his mother had decided to come to the Cadiz hospital to seek help from a group they had not heard of before. The group was the International Children's Surgical Foundation. Resty felt certain that the new group would be like the others and find a reason not to operate, especially since the group had the word *Children* in its name, and he was then 20.



*Resty with congenital deformity of left lip and lower eyelid nose and lip-before surgery*

As I began to examine Resty on the first day of the mission, I sensed an air of hopelessness in Resty's countenance. The eyelid deformity was one of the worst congenital lid deformities I had seen. I could see scarring of Resty's cornea from years of sleeping with his eye uncovered. I knew that without surgery the young man in front of me would lose the vision in his left eye, which would mean that he would no longer be able to see in three dimensions. Common tasks such as riding a bicycle would be difficult, not to mention many of the jobs available to people in his region.

As I looked at our surgical schedule, I unhesitatingly gave Resty his surgery date. His first expression was one of disbelief. He might have been imagining what excuse I would give to not operate. He began to radiate a feeling of hope as reality set in—he actually was going to get the surgery he needed.

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# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

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When Resty's surgery date came, I looked at him as he was lying anesthetized in front of me on the operating table. I felt privileged to be part of an organization that takes on complicated patients who have been rejected by other mission groups. Resty's surgery took five hours but was extremely satisfying.

When Resty came for his post-operative follow-up visit, he was all smiles. He knew that his worries about his vision and his future were over. He also knew that he was now on ICSF's radar, and that we would be back to evaluate his results and perform the needed touch-ups as well as correction of his lip and nose deformity.

As I think about ICSF's donors and supporters, I know that not a single one of you would think that Resty was "not poor enough" to receive his sight-saving surgery. Thanks to all of you—for your donations, your support, and your prayers. You are helping to ensure that Resty and many others who have lost hope were "born to smile."



*After 5 hour surgery, Resty is greatly relieved that he can now close his left eye and will not lose his eyesight, thanks to ICSF's donors and the ICSF medical team.*

*Dr. Geoff Williams*

President, ICSF

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*Rosemary before surgery (left), and (right) after receiving the Gift of a Smile from ICSF's donors*