



INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S SURGICAL FOUNDATION

"Everyone Was Born to Smile"

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ICSF Says Goodbye to Founding Member, Beverly Williams

By Dr. Geoff Williams, ICSF president

Beverly Williams, co-founder and secretary-treasurer of ICSF, passed away unexpectedly on July 19, 2016, at the age of 86 while working in her vegetable garden at her home in Boise, Idaho. Her garden was a place she loved and loved to work in — and the place that she had repeatedly said she wanted to pass away in when the time came.

Beverly brought to ICSF what many charitable organizations are missing: A true heart and passion for helping those in need. Beverly, my mother, was the first person to express support after I announced my decision to leave all practice in the United States in 2004 and serve full-time in the developing world. "Geoff, this is what you were born to do!" she exclaimed over the telephone. Her words became an ensign in my mind, giving me courage to face an unknown future, a future that has now become filled with thousands of little smiles and happy families in poor countries around the world.

Beverly played a major part in ICSF's success with her outgoing, engaging, and perennially cheerful personality. She made friends with virtually every donor and supporter of ICSF, and did it sincerely. She never had any motive other than caring about people. She treated the small donors the same as the larger ones. Her method to make people feel cared about was simple; she *did* care about them. She had no facades.

As news of her passing spread, condolences began to pour in from all four hemispheres, including from little patients and their families who had come to know about Beverly and her role in ICSF.



Beverly with a Mexican ICSF burn patient

(Continued on page 2)

Beverly Williams *(continued)*

(Continued from page 1)

Beverly was born in Denver, Colorado, on October, 19, 1929. She grew up in Denver and attended the University of Colorado, where she met her husband, Milt Williams, my dad. The young couple moved to Idaho, where they took up residence in a number of small cities, eventually moving to Boise, which became their permanent home. Beverly taught school in the Boise School District for a number of years but always felt that something else was waiting for her. I believe that "something else" was ICSF. On a regular basis, Beverly would tell me, "I am so thankful to be involved in this work! It makes me feel alive and young."

Beverly took care of ICSF's finances and other necessities, including her favorite activity, writing thank-you letters to ICSF's donors. Beverly never asked for nor took any financial compensation for the work she did, because it was a labor of love to her.

It is true that I will miss Beverly for what she provided to ICSF. She was, and will continue to be, ICSF's heart and soul. More than that, I will miss Beverly because of the mother and friend she was to me. She supported me in every worthy venture I have undertaken in my life, including ICSF. She gave me words of encouragement and helped me prepare for each of ICSF's overseas surgical missions.

She kissed me goodnight, every night, on the forehead when I was in Boise between missions. She taught me that there is a kind God who loves me and would help me in all I do. She taught me how to sincerely love and care about people. She would frequently say, "Life is the most wonderful thing!" and she lived every day accordingly.

Goodbye, Mom. ICSF will miss you. I will miss you and your kind, sweet influence, for the rest of my life. God bless you for all the good you did in this world and for being my mom. ICSF will carry on its work with all of the heart and soul that you left with us.



Beverly sacking surgical supplies July 11, the night before ICSF's recent Pakistan mission

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

'The One'

Thirteen-month-old Mario came to ICSF's Guatemala City mission late. I first became aware of Mario's presence in the room when we were seeing the last of the children with cleft lips and palates and had a nearly full schedule. I was asked to come to the other side of the large clinic room, where I saw a young father holding a child in a blanket, the mother at his side. I could not see the child at first because a small crowd of clinic workers and nurses had crowded around, a tip-off that someone very unusual was being held within the colorful blanket.

With great interest, I walked toward the gathering and asked if I could get close to see what all the fuss was about. As I came into viewing range of who was in the blanket, my first thought was, "What a ghastly deformity!" There in front of me was a child with a large split of the face—not the lip, but the face! A cleft of the face was something I had seen and treated before but not to this degree of severity.

We learned that the boy's name was Mario. It was suggested to us that Mario's case was so severe that the amount of time it would take for a surgery would preclude a number of other more simple cases and that we should therefore not accept the boy as a patient.

Upon hearing this, however, it occurred to me that ICSF is known for caring for "the one." On a past occasion I had traveled to Africa for a single patient with a severe defect that the local doctors did not have the expertise to handle. Although we were able to treat other patients on that African trip, I had felt very gratified to be able to make such an effort for "the one." I learned that the little boy in front of me had already been rejected by a large American team due to the severity of his deformity. It touched me that Mario had been brought to our mission in search of help. I realized that Mario's case was the kind that ICSF accepts because of our level of commitment. There really wasn't much more to think about — Mario would be our patient!

As I announced that we would schedule surgery for Mario, his parents looked at each other with a smile. Special tests were taken, and an entire day was created on the schedule for Mario without having to cancel other patients' surgeries.

Mario's day came on a Tuesday. The ICSF anesthesia team was headed by Dr. Eric Holley, a pediatric anesthesia expert from Primary Children's Hospital in Salt Lake City, Utah. Special considerations were made to ensure safe anesthesia and a safe surgery. Although everyone seemed anxious as the surgery began, a feeling of calm soon pervaded the operating room.

More than nine hours later Mario opened his eyes with his new face. The ICSF team had risen to the occasion to help "the one" that could have so easily been left behind. In usual ICSF fashion, part of the team was still there the week after completion of surgeries to evaluate Mario's healing.

All the news was good — and to top it off, Mario gave the team a little smile. As Mario's mother carried him out of the exam room I felt very glad, as I have felt many times before, that we had helped "the one." Thank you, ICSF's supporters, for enabling us to help little Mario and his family. Yes, everyone, including "the one," was "Born to Smile."



13-month-old Mario with rare facial cleft, before surgery



Mario, one week after his 9-hour surgery by ICSF for his rare facial cleft

Dr. Geoff Williams

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ICSF Serves First Annual Beverly Williams Memorial Mission

Beginning this year and for each year in the future, ICSF will designate one of its surgical missions as the Annual Beverly Williams Memorial Mission. This year the site was Kabankalan City, the Philippines, August 6-19.

"This was a very special mission for me as it was the first mission we carried out after my dear mother's passing away," explained Dr. Geoff Williams, ICSF president. "It was a very fitting mission by which to commemorate

Beverly's life because it was a follow-up mission, meaning that children who could not be accommodated in a previous mission were taken care of on this mission. Beverly was always concerned about children who were left over at the end of a mission, such as those who had come late or could not be accommodated due to a large turn-out. Therefore, the Kabankalan follow-up mission embodied her desire that no one be left behind," Dr. Williams added.



Three-year-old Ashley Joy of Kabankalan, the Philippines, before (left) and six months after her six-hour surgery by ICSF for her bilateral cleft lip

ICSF Serves Missions in All Four Hemispheres May-August

Children with a variety of burn and congenital facial deformities were treated free of charge by ICSF in the countries of Guatemala, Bolivia, Peru, Mexico, Pakistan and the Philippines, May through August. "Serving six countries in four months was a record pace for ICSF" commented Dr. Geoff Williams. "The thrill of changing lives and bringing hope all over the world never grows old", he added.



Three--month-old Sofi of Guatemala before (left) and one week after surgery by ICSF.