



INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S SURGICAL FOUNDATION

"Everyone Was Born to Smile"

ICSFOUNDATION.ORG VOLUME 11 NO.3



ICSF's Second Annual Beverly Williams Memorial Cleft Palate Mission Report



James received surgery for his bilateral cleft lip by ICSF in 2011, when 8 months old but then came too late to a recent mission to have his cleft palate repaired.

financed, we began conducting follow-up missions to take care of those who could not be accommodated due to a large turn-out. Being able to conduct these follow-up missions is a blessing imparted to us by our donors. In our March mission to Dipolog, we had over eighty kids come, which, by far exceeded our capacity. So, instead of turning the remainder of the children away, we immediately gave them dates for a follow-up mission in August. None were saddened by not initially receiving the long-awaited surgeries, but rather, all seemed to be satisfied to know that they were each being given a specific date to return for their surgeries. These follow-up missions were very gratifying to my mother, giving her the peace of mind to know that all who came did, in fact,

Twenty-Nine children and young adults received free, life-changing surgery during the Second Annual Beverly Williams Memorial Mission to Dipolog Philippines. "There is a specific reason why *this* mission was chosen to commemorate my mother, Bev Williams," says Dr. Geoff Williams. "I have often thought that my mother was, and still is, the heart and soul of our very unique organization. After returning from a mission she would frequently ask if all the children who came hoping for surgery were able to have their surgery. In our earlier years I would many times have to sadly report that –no, there were too many kids to do surgery for all of them. My mother always became visibly saddened upon hearing this kind of a report. When ICSF later became better fi-



James, six years after lip surgery by ICSF. His cleft palate was corrected in this year's Beverly Williams Memorial follow-up mission to the Philippines.

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receive the life-changing surgeries they had hoped for. For this reason, the follow-up mission to Dipolog in August was chosen as our annual mission to commemorate and remember the person who gave so much heart and soul to ICSF. It was my mother's influence that helped shape our ideals that no one should be left behind and that every child should receive all the time and care necessary for long-lasting, beautiful and functional surgical results."

A Beverly Williams Memorial Mission will be conducted annually by the ICSF surgical team.



ICSF Serves Cleft Palate Missions to Pakistan, Peru and the Philippines

The countries of Pakistan, Peru and the Philippines were the recipients of ICSF's high quality surgical care in August-November. Each of the three missions were unique. The Pakistan mission was a training mission wherein six plastic surgeons learned the art and science of cleft lip and palate surgery from Dr. Geoff Williams, ICSF President and Medical Director. The Dipolog mission was a follow-up mission wherein children who had not been able to receive surgery during a previous mission due to a large turn-out, were taken care of. The Peru mission was a mission wherein ICSF treated children who had had surgery by other mission groups but with undesirable results. Says Dr. Williams, "In Peru we encountered many children who had been operated by groups that work very quickly and often do not produce acceptable results for the kids. We were privileged to take over the treatment of these kids and give them the quality of surgery that they deserve".



Bhebe Joy (Philippines) before Surgery and two weeks after

Message from the President

'When Fathers Cry'

Mothers cry for their children. We love mothers for that. But what about fathers? In our society and in many others, including the Philippines, it is considered unmanly to cry. Therefore fathers, in many circumstances, feel emotional but suppress their feelings. Only in the most poignant of moments do fathers let their emotions show to the point of shedding tears. Lariano's moment came during ICSF's Second Annual Beverly Williams Memorial Mission in Dipolog Philippines in August.

Lariano is a good father and like many fathers in the Philippines he provides relatively well for his family with what little resources he has. His family has food, clothes and a roof over their heads which is quite an accomplishment in this impoverished Southeast Asian country. One thing however that had haunted Lariano over the years was that his 12-year-old son, Joven had been born with a severe cleft lip and palate and had not yet received treatment. Lariano, as a result, felt unrelenting guilt and anxiety. He had heard about cleft missions that had come to the province from time to time but he had always heard too late.

One day in August of this year, Lariano overheard some people talking about a free cleft lip mission coming to the province's capital city of Dipolog –and to Lariano's great glee, the mission had not started yet!

When Lariano arrived at the hospital with Joven he saw a large crowd of children with cleft lips. His happiness turned to concern when a nurse saw him and told him that the mission was mainly for patients who had been left over from a previous mission. Lariano asked if he could still talk to the doctors, hoping to get surgery for his son, and his request was granted.

As I examined Joven, Lariano at his side, I explained that the current mission was for people who had come to ICSF's previous mission, 5 months prior, but had been asked to wait due to a large turn-out. It would be unfair, I explained, to give Joven a slot for surgery, taking away a slot for someone who had already come and had been waiting for a number of months. The sadness on Lariano's face was so penetrating that I gazed away briefly. When my eyes again met Lariano's, his were filled with tears, which soon overflowed and ran down his cheeks. I groped for something I could say to undo the sadness I had caused with my words, but could only offer for him and his son

to come again the following year. Lariano politely thanked the team, got up and left. We team members looked at each other and then agreed that if there was a cancellation in the schedule, we would call Lariano and add his son to the surgery schedule.

As providence would have it, during the second week of the mission, a mother called in, saying her child was sick and could not make it for the scheduled surgery. Although I am usually saddened by such news, I instantly remembered Lariano and his tears of sadness. We would be able to accommodate Lariano's son to receive the long-awaited surgery! When Lariano and his son arrived at the hospital his face reflected hope. As I looked at the humble father and his son, I saw an opportunity to change not only a child's life, but also a *father's*.



Lariano and his son, Joven, before surgery



Joven, one week after surgery

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Although Joven's surgery went into the night, there were no corners cut or anything that would lessen the results and the long-term outcome of the surgery. As I placed the last stitch I knew that Lariano's sadness had come to an end. When I entered the recovery room after the surgery Lariano was facing away from me, looking at his sleeping son. As I approached he turned toward me and, once again, tears were running down his cheeks, but this time it was very clear that they were tears of joy. Lariano then smiled the smile of a father whose life had been changed—because his son's life had been changed.

To our supporters, I hope you know that you helped change not only a son's life but a father's life as well. Everyone, even Lariano, was 'born to smile'.

Dr. Geoff Williams

President, ICSF

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The Gift of a Smile

Seven-Year-Old Marissa never really wanted much for Christmas. All she really wanted was to be normal. Marissa had been born with a cleft lip and palate in to a poor family in a poor country. While Marissa's mother grieved for her daughter she had not been in any hurry to have her daughter's cleft lip repaired. She had seen many poor children in her area of the Philippines who had undergone fast surgery by large volunteer mission groups and she had wanted better for her daughter. In many cases the children's repaired lips were crooked, flat or otherwise malformed, causing the children to continue to be teased and not included by their peers. Then, one year, Marissa's mother heard about a new group that was coming to her area, the International Children's Surgical Foundation. The name of the organization was not frilled or catchy. She felt good about taking her daughter to the new group's mission. When Marissa was examined by the ICSF team her mother sensed there was something different about the group and she consented to surgery for her daughter. Marissa's surgery took three hours which was a relief to her mother who had heard, over the years, about how fast the surgeries are performed by the other the mission groups, some performed in as little as 45 minutes. After the surgery in the recovery area, Marissa's mother knew she had found the right organization as she looked at her beautiful, sleeping daughter. This Christmas would be different than the others, she thought. Her daughter had received the gift that would last for a life-time—the Gift of a Smile.



*Marissa before receiving the Gift
of a Smile*

***This Holiday Season,
give the Gift of a
Smile, the Gift that
lasts a lifetime—to a
poor child in a far-
away land!***



*Marissa after receiving the Gift
of a Smile*