INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S SURGICAL FOUNDATION

"Everyone Was Born to Smile"

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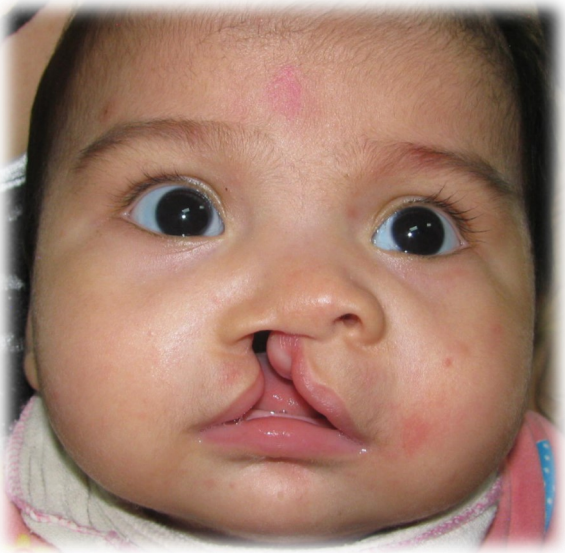
ICSF Serves in the Philippines and Marks its Twentieth Year in Vietnam



Cuong, Vietnam, before surgery at six months of age, and one year after surgery by ICSF.

Fifty-three children in the Philippines and Vietnam received free surgery by ICSF in August. Also, roughly eighty hours of one-on-one training to local health professionals was rendered, further enabling local doctors to treat their own patients. Dr. Williams recalls; "the last twenty years of working in Vietnam has been rewarding not only because of the surgeries performed but also because of the training of local doctors that has been accomplished. That is really what ICSF is all about—empowering the local health professionals to care for their own patients. No other organization does this to the extent that we do."

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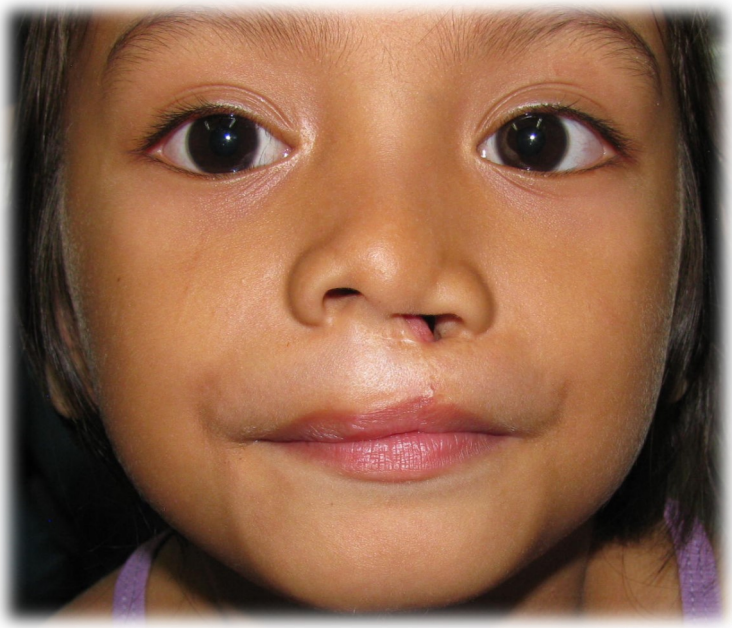
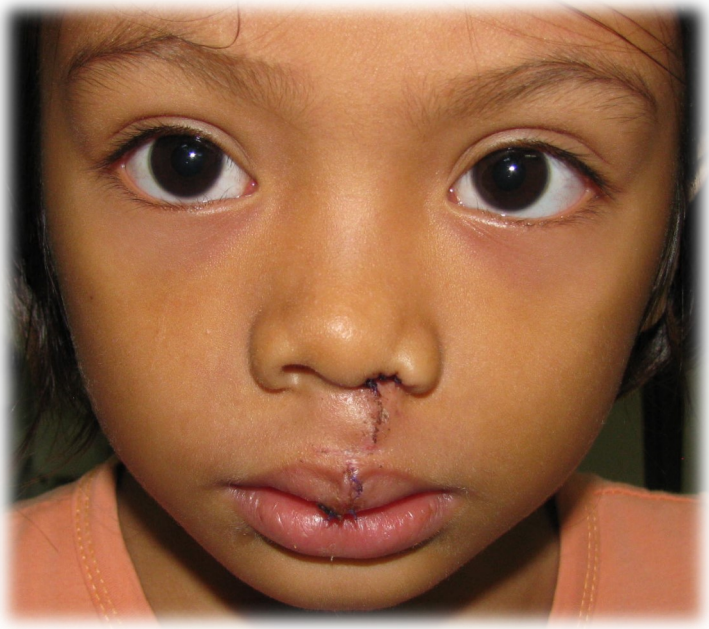
ICSF in the Philippines and Vietnam

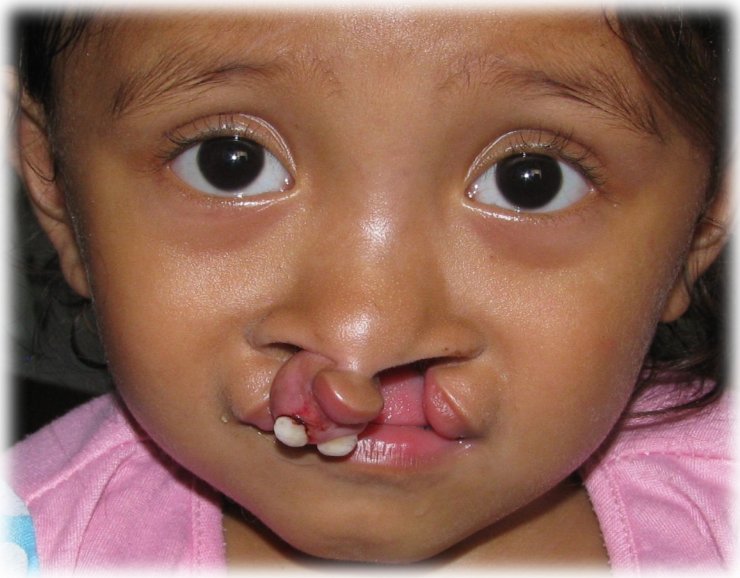




Left: Julfah, Philippines, before surgery by ICSF. Julfah had been operated on hastily by another mission team which advertises 45-minute surgeries. She was still being teased because of the hole just below her left nostril and other irregularities. Right: Julfah after three-hour surgery by ICSF.

The Gift of a Smile

Ashley Joy received the Gift of a Smile three years ago by ICSF. She uses her gift every day and will continue to for the rest of her life. Give the Gift of a Smile to a poor child in a poor country this Christmas season—the Gift that lasts a lifetime!



Ashley Joy before surgery

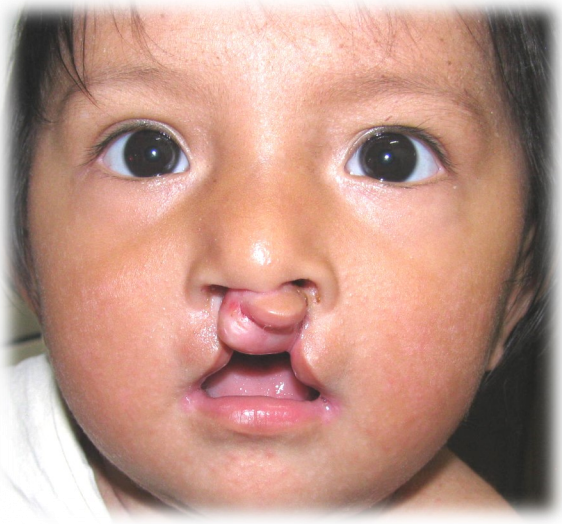
Ashley Joy after receiving the Gift of a Smile by ICSF

Message from the President

Jessica, Trans-equatorial baby

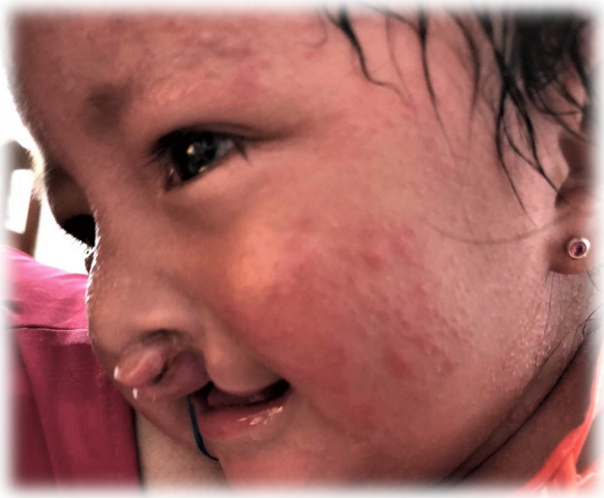
In a heartbeat I knew how to respond to the pleading email. A nonsurgical medical group had recently completed a mission to the highlands of Ecuador. One of the mission's volunteers had just emailed me about a baby born with a cleft lip that had been brought to the mission but could not be treated because of the surgical nature of her problem. After telling me a little bit about nine-month-old Jessica and her bilateral cleft lip, the volunteer pleaded: "do you have teams that work in Ecuador?"

As I read the email, something inside me told me to immediately respond by saying: "We will be honored to take on Jessica as a patient." As I clicked SEND I knew that somehow it would be made possible even though ICSF does not work in Ecuador. It always had worked out in past similar situations. I felt a moment of panic, however, as the realities of what I had just committed to began to sink in. Whatever the solution, it would be complicated and likely involve transporting a poor family, including a baby, internationally. I then remembered that ICSF had a mission scheduled to the neighboring country of Peru in the not-too-distant future. But still—how would it all come together? My mind began to whirl. I knew that there was a large US-based cleft organization that routinely serves in Ecuador. Should I back-track on my commitment and refer the baby to the other organization? Then….. a soft but sure prompting came: "No one treats these children with as much care and concern as ICSF." The answer became clear. Even though we had not yet met Jessica or her family they deserved the very best. They deserved ICSF.



Jessica after day-long trip from Ecuador and prior to surgery

After more than sixty emails, messages and phone calls to various individuals in three countries, including the US, arrangements were made to transport Jessica, her parents and a translator/facilitator from Jessica's home in Ecuador to Pucallpa, Peru, for ICSF's annual mission there. We had been extremely fortunate in a number of ways including that a Peruvian Rotary Club had become interested in Jessica's plight and had opened their homes for the family to stay in during the ten day mission.



Jessica with rash

All seemed on track when the medical team approached Jessica's hospital bed on the morning of her long-awaited surgery. As I examined the little girl closely however I became concerned about a severe rash that had appeared on the little face since the previous night. A consult with a local dermatologist and other professionals concluded that the rash was due to the significant change in altitude and climate-- from Jessica's Ecuadorian home at 14,000 feet with it's cool, dry weather, all the way down to nearly sea level at the Pucallpa mission site with its hot, humid amazonian climate. Sadly,

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Jessica's surgery would have to be cancelled or postponed due to the bumpy rash which could pose a risk to healing after the delicate five-hour surgery for her bilateral cleft lip. Carmen, Jessica's mother, at first took the news well but then began to doubt that her daughter would ever receive the needed surgery. I, also, wondered if it was meant to be. As the team visited Jessica day by day, good news gradually appeared on Jessica's face. The rash was slowly disappearing due to special daily baths prescribed by the dermatologist. Four days after Jessica's arrival, the tiny face had normalized sufficiently and our little high-mountain Ecuadorian patient was finally scheduled for surgery.

Jessica's delicate surgery involved cutting a bone inside her palate to reposition part of the upper jaw and then using specialized skin flaps and carefully-placed muscle and skin sutures to form the new lip. All went better than expected and after four-and-a-half hours of careful, painstaking surgery a newly-repaired Jessica laid in front of me there on the operating table. As I looked on during Jessica's emergence from anesthesia I marveled at all that had taken place: The commitment to treat a little girl with a complex deformity from a country not in our mission schedule--as well as the extensive planning, discussion and effort that had been made by so many people. As I gazed at the beautiful new little face, still asleep, I felt as though it was all meant to be, seemingly as if a divine hand was there guiding every step, up to and including the surgery itself.

Jessica immediately after four-and-a-half hour surgery by ICSF

Jessica after surgery getting ready to travel back to Ecuador

Yet another poor child, born with a facial deformity in a far corner of our planet had been reached by ICSF and her life forever changed for the better.

ICSF's supporters will likely never meet Jessica or her parents, but the ICSF Pucallpa mission team members can attest to the effect of our supporter's donations on not only Jessica's life but also the other children whose lives were changed during the Pucallpa mission.

Thank you to our supporters. We know you believed in the ICSF team when we committed to Jessica's care and, like us, you believe that 'everyone was born to smile.'

Dr. Geoff Williams

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