

Changing Lives
One Smile At A Time



Operation**Smile**

Dear Dr. Chen - Thank you
for your trust + support
since May of 1991 when
we had the pleasure to

30378 Changing Lives
One Smile At A Time



meet you in Shanghai -

Written by Brian Mullaney & Dr. Bill Magee

Dr. Magee

[Redacted] Thanks -
Kath + Bill

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Preface



When we tell people about Operation Smile, they always ask for numbers. How many children have you helped? How many volunteers do you have? How many countries do you visit? When we answer, they're usually impressed. Since 1982 we've helped more than 20,000 children.

We've recruited more than 5,000 volunteers.

We've worked in 15 countries including the United States.

Yes, our numbers are impressive. But they don't tell the tale nearly as well as our stories do. Numbers don't have little faces or tiny hands that tug at your sleeve asking for help. Numbers don't have names like Anna, Jose or Coffee Boy. Numbers can't make you smile. Or put a tear in your eye. Or a lump in your throat.

When we want people to understand what Operation Smile is really all about, we tell them our stories. Which is why we're so lucky to have the opportunity to publish this "storybook." It contains some of our favorite stories from the past 14 years.

We'd like to thank Johnson & Johnson, whose generosity made this book possible. And we'd also like to acknowledge the tens of thousands of OpSmile volunteers, donors and supporters around the world. Because of you, each and every one of these stories has a happy ending. Thanks to you, we're able to change the world, one smile at a time.



Introduction

*T*housands of children throughout the world have benefited from the magic of Operation Smile — an organization that crosses national and cultural barriers to bring facial reconstructive surgery to medically needy youngsters. While teams of medical professionals are volunteering their time and surgical expertise throughout the world, other volunteers are busy with essential support tasks such as recruiting and fund-raising.

Johnson & Johnson is pleased to have supported the work of Operation Smile since its inception. However, without the volunteerism that characterizes this organization, corporate support and product donations would be of little value.

In talking about Operation Smile with Bill and Kathy Magee, one hears recurring stories about discomfort and



deformity, coupled with isolation, loneliness and desperation. Through surgical intervention, these stories end happily with a transformation to beautiful form and full function...and a smile. The process is documented in this book, which contains a remarkable collection of pictures of Operation Smile patients.

Ralph S. Larsen
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
Johnson & Johnson

Message From The Founders

*A*s the work of Operation Smile continues, it is a great honor for us to pay tribute to the thousands of volunteers who have created this organization and carried its spirit to the far corners of the world.

The images illustrated in this book are but a small part of the story, and we hope you will treasure the faces, the smiles and the promise of new life as we do. It has been a privilege to touch the face of humanity through Operation Smile. From our crude beginnings in the Philippines in 1982, we are proof that there are no ordinary moments in life. Most of us never really recognize the most significant





moments in our lives when they are happening. Through Operation Smile, many have seen that life's greatest reward is being able to take care of one another. We applaud the work of thousands of volunteers, and appreciate the opportunity to share our faces with you through these pages. Thank you for giving us all reasons to smile.

Dr. Bill and Kathy Magee, Co-Founders

For Those Who Are Not Chosen, It Is A Long Journey Home



On every mission, Operation Smile sends a small advance team to screen applicants and to choose the children who will receive surgery.

After a couple days of screening, the advance team stays up all night and carefully reviews each and every application. There can be as many as 500 to 600. The team weighs all kinds of factors in deciding which children will benefit the most.

The next day a list is posted with the names of the lucky chosen few. For both the medical team and the families, this is a very

painful experience. Because for every child that is chosen, there are at least three or four that are turned away. For most, it is a bitter disappointment. OpSmile is usually



their only chance.

The mothers and fathers cry and beg and plead for us to add just one more child to the list. We try. And

inevitably we squeeze in another three or four to an already overloaded surgical schedule. But even operating 16 hours a day, we only have enough supplies, resources



and people to do so many cases. As much as we hate to, there always comes a time when we have to say no.

We always promise that we'll be back next year — and we do

come back. But many of them don't believe us. And even if they do, a year is a long time to wait when you have a big hole in your face and your father makes 42 cents a day. ■



45 Minutes That Can Change A Face, Change A Life

The most common procedure we perform is a cleft lip repair. It's a relatively simple procedure that, on average, takes only 45 minutes. That's all the time it takes for an experienced surgeon to disassemble a deformed lip and reassemble it correctly. Most of the time, it requires no additional surgery



or treatment. The children return a week or so after surgery to have their sutures removed and that's it.

That's the beauty of what we do. These children are totally cured after this procedure. Just 45 minutes can transform a deformed child into a normal, happy kid. It's like a modern-day miracle. And nothing demonstrates it better than our before and after photos.

It's really what differentiates



Operation Smile from other organizations. While many charities and nonprofits are searching for cures and battling problems that may never be solved, we have the “cure.”

Which is why it is so sad that

millions of children around the world suffer for years and years with a problem that can be fixed so easily and so quickly.

All it takes is a little money.
Some people who care.

And 45 minutes.

“Colorful Cloud”

H

er name was “Colorful Cloud.” And here in the words of a volunteer who observed her surgery is the story of this 9-year-old Chinese girl.

She was a very pretty girl — from the nose up. Unfortunately, her deformed lip made her look like a monster. She was a very brave little girl as we led her, alone, into the operating room and sat her on a table surrounded by 12 to 15 masked Americans dressed in surgical garb and babbling away in English.

You could see in her eyes that she was terrified. But she didn't hesitate. She took the anesthesia mask, placed it to

her own mouth and started breathing. She was asleep in seconds and we began the operation. The team leader began by “sketching” out the procedure. He marked her lips and skin where he wanted to cut. Then he began by “un-doing” her malformed lip. He very carefully cut it apart and separated the pieces of her upper lip, cheek and nose that had bonded — or didn't bond — in the wrong areas. Once it was all



undone, he slowly, and very carefully, started to put it all back together bit by bit. It took just 50 minutes in all. Even with all

those stitches, “Colorful Cloud” looked beautiful.

We carried her into the post-op room and brought her father in to see her. He was a very handsome, very proud, very poor peasant. As a rice farmer, he told us he could never afford to even think of fixing her cleft lip. OpSmile was her only chance. They had traveled more than 240 kilometers. You could tell by his beaming face that it was

worth the trip.

When she awoke, a nurse came over to her with a mirror and held it up. "Colorful Cloud" stared right at it. Her expression didn't

change at all. Nothing. No reaction at all. I don't know what we were expecting. Maybe a big smile, a scream, a gasp, who knows? But she just stared.



Then the most amazing thing happened. A single, solitary tear drop, squeezed out of her right eye and slowly slid down her cheek.

I don't think any of us who were there in that room will ever forget that moment, that little girl, and that single little tear drop that said so much more than words ever could.



Blue Bandanna



Of the hundreds of children who showed up at one of our first Operation Smile missions to the Philippines, a young 16-year-old really stood out.

Antero Asico wore the blue bandanna over half his face. It was the only way he could go out in public because his face was literally being eaten away. An open, raw sore had eaten away his nose and most of his upper lip. It was a severe case brought on by malnutrition and infection, and we were unable to treat him on the mission. His only hope was a trip to the United States.



We tried for six months to raise the money without any luck. It was a chance encounter with a businessman who saw the photo of the kid with the blue bandanna that made the difference. He immediately offered to pay for Antero's trip and operation in the United States.

But the money wasn't enough. the Philippine government refused to give him a visa to travel to the United States. An OpSmile volunteer had to fly to Washington, D.C. to enlist the support of a U.S.

Senator. After seeing photos of Antero and hearing his story, the Senator agreed to help. After two weeks of working through the U.S. Embassy, Antero was given a visa and put on a plane to the U.S.

Seven years after his surgery,



Antero met us once again and introduced us to his wife and nine-month-old child. Looking at the two pictures side-by-side, you can see what a profound difference these surgical procedures can make. For Antero, it was like being saved from a death sentence.