



NEWSLETTER

TAX DEDUCTION EDITION - 2024

**20
YEARS!
20,700
CLEFTS
SMILING**

EMPOWERING CHANGE
YOUR SUPPORT HEALING SMILES IN
BANGLADESH

Rotary
Box Hill Central



Operation Cleft is an International Project of the
Rotary Club of Box Hill Central Inc. District 9810, Australia

M E S S A G E

From Recently Appointed Chair Kath Ronan



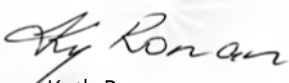
It is an honour and a privilege to introduce myself to you as the newly appointed Chair of Operation Cleft Australia (Foundation), from November 2023. I have been a Board member of OCA since 2018, including as Secretary and Deputy Chair.

Under the guidance of past Chair, Bruce McEwen, I have learnt so much about this project and am proud to play a part in it. I am pleased that Bruce has continued on the Board, offering me significant support and guidance.

Under Chairman Bruce, OCA has continued to work well with Deutsche Cleft Kinderhilfe (DCKH) and we hope to continue that collaboration into the future. In spite of Covid, the Cleft Bangladesh continued to undertake the targeted 1500 operations on the children of Bangladesh and we anticipate this will continue.

The success of this program only works because of your belief and generosity in supporting this project. We thank you, your families and Rotary Clubs for providing the financial resources for this amazing work to continue.

As Operation Cleft moves towards its 20th Anniversary, we hope that you will continue to support this amazing project. Our sincere thanks to you for making this possible.


Kath Ronan

From outgoing Chair Bruce McEwen



After six years as Chair of the Operation Cleft Australia Inc. Board, and four years previously as Secretary, Bruce hands over the mantle of OCA leadership to new Chair, Kath Ronan. Bruce reflects on six years in leadership of this nearly 20-year-old 'life changing' program – bringing hope, health, and a smile, through the provision of more than 20,000 free Cleft-lip and pallet surgeries to the Cleft suffering, poor and disadvantaged children of Bangladesh.

'Bruce Reflections': These past six years have been up there as some of the most significant and fulfilling years of my life. To be part of a dedicated (Rotary backed) volunteer team, committed to providing this life changing program, has been a privilege and joy, beyond what I could have ever hoped for.

These are the things that have brought a smile to my face over these past six years:

The many Children whose lives and faces have been transformed. The stories and pictures of Mums and Dads in tears of joy, overwhelmed by the change and a future made possible through the skills of our dedicated Cleft surgery team.

The different stories and backgrounds of our six, highly skilled, deeply committed surgeons, each one totally devoted to providing free, often complex 'Maxillofacial' plastic surgery for their fellow Bangladeshi children, whose families could not ever afford such surgery.

Working with Moinul Islam, an enthusiastic, bright, and talented young Bangladeshi who I first met in 2014, when he commenced as OCA's Bangladesh In-country Manager, providing the important liaison with our local BD NGO, surgeons, and hospitals. Moinul migrated to Australia in 2018, works for the City of Greater Geelong, yet continues to serve on the OCA Board as our OCA Goodwill Ambassador and produces this newsletter. (Continues)

I have also deeply appreciated working with our 'Cleft Bangladesh' staff in Bangladesh and our local NGO, SNAD Inc.

Also working together with our Partner DCKH (Deutsch Cleft Kinderhilfe e.V) has been a highlight. In 2018 Operation Cleft Australia Inc. entered into a collaborative agreement with DCKH, a German based non-for-profit organisation with experience providing Cleft Lip and Palate surgery support in more than a dozen Asian, African, and South American countries. It's been a delight to work with such an experienced partner, share resources and thereby effectively minimise in-country administrative costs.

I am deeply appreciative of the many other things that have made me smile!

These include the faithful, overwhelming support of you, our broad family of supportive donor partners here in Australia. It's your faithfulness in giving that has made 'smiles' possible for the Cleft suffering children across Bangladesh. It's the many lovely phone calls, notes, emails, greetings from caring individuals, couples, families, Small businesses, Trusts and Rotary Clubs that continue to make these amazing outcomes all possible.

Thanks to our Board members and our many other volunteers for the support and for sharing the load and for the many committed members and friends within Rotary Club's and the

broader Rotary world, particularly the members of the Rotary Club of Box Hill Central and staff at the Club's Recycle Shop. Kath Ronan our new Operation Cleft Australia Chair (I continue to serve her and our Board as the Deputy Chair) is a fellow member of the Rotary Club of Box Hill Central.

Kath has been serving on our Board since 2018 and as Deputy Chair since 2022. Kath brings many years of clinical and medical experience to the role.

Kath will lead the up-coming self-funded visit to Bangladesh in late May. This will be our first visit post Covid. Moinul has organised for the eight of us to visit 4 Clinics in four major centres, visit several Rotary Clubs, meet the children and their parents undergoing Surgery, including involvement at one Clinic in Cox's Bazar, where the Clinic will be made up of Cleft suffering Children from the huge UNA Rohingya Refugee camp (more than one million refugees) situated close by. I will continue as Deputy Chair, supporting Kath and the Board. Thanks for the amazing encouragement support and affirmations shared with me over my six years as Chair. Again, thanks for making 'the Gift of a Smile' such an amazing reality for so many children.

Bruce McEwen



NOTICE BOARD



Join us at the 2024 Rotary International Convention in Singapore!

We warmly invite you to join us at the 2024 Rotary International Convention in Singapore from May 24th to May 29th. If you have the opportunity to attend this prestigious convention, please take a moment to stop by and say hello. Come meet our Operation Cleft Ambassadors and volunteers at Booth No: 2404 in The House of Friendship Exhibit Hall at Marina Bay Sands Expo & Convention Centre. We would be honored to meet you, share our experiences, and discuss our passion for making a positive impact in the lives of children born with cleft conditions. We look forward to connecting with you in Singapore and working together to create a brighter future for those in need.

**Location: Marina Bay Sands Expo & Convention Centre.
The House of Friendship Exhibit Hall, Booth: 2404**

Exciting Journey Ahead: OCA Team Ventures to Bangladesh



A team of 8 dedicated Rotarians is gearing up for an inspiring journey to Bangladesh at the end of May. Fresh from the Rotary Conference in Singapore, our team will dive into the heart of Operation Cleft's progress in Bangladesh.

Our agenda is packed with enriching experiences. We'll witness firsthand the incredible work being done in surgical camps, observing live surgical processes in the operating theatre. Meeting our talented surgeons will deepen our appreciation for their skill and dedication.

But our journey doesn't stop there. We're eager to connect with Rotary Clubs across Bangladesh, fostering fellowship and strengthening partnerships in our shared mission. And let's not forget the chance to explore Bangladesh's rich history, visiting places of historical interest that captivate the imagination.

Excitement buzzes as we prepare for this adventure of a lifetime. Stay tuned to our newsletter as we share our experiences and reflections from this transformative journey.

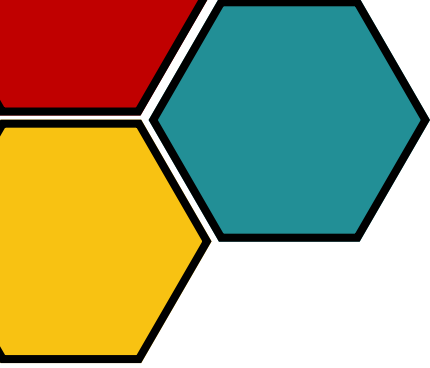
Operation Cleft Implements Safer Anesthesia for Patient Safety

Operation Cleft is proud to announce a significant step forward in ensuring the safety of our young patients undergoing cleft lip and palate surgeries in Bangladesh. In collaboration with DCKH and our local partners, we've decided to prohibit the use of Halothane—an anaesthetic associated with safety concerns. In the future, we will be using Isoflurane as an anaesthetic drug in all our surgeries.

We extend our gratitude to our surgeons for prioritising patient safety above all else. This transition underscores our commitment to excellence in patient care at Operation Cleft.

As always, the well-being of our patients remains our top priority. We're excited to continue our mission with renewed dedication, ensuring safe and effective cleft surgeries for children in need.





Faeyza's Journey : A Tale of Love, Courage, and Hope

In the heart of Cox's Bazar, Faeyza Hossain's journey began with a diagnosis that cast shadows of uncertainty. Born on March 2023, she entered a world where her cleft condition drew whispers of ridicule and blame from even her closest kin.

But amidst the turmoil, Faeyza's mother stood unwavering, her heart filled with a mother's love and determination. "Even though I was dying inside, I am her mother, must fix her" she declared, her voice trembling with unwavering determination.

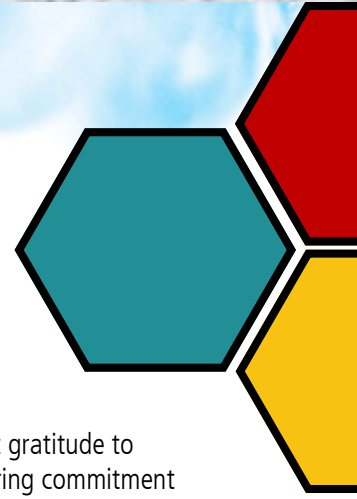
With the compassionate care of our surgeon Dr. Al Masum Ziaul Haque and his team, Faeyza found a path to healing. On October 12, 2023, she underwent her cleft surgery, a glimmer of hope in a world of uncertainty. And on January 18, 2024, she went through palate surgery with courage and strength.

As Faeyza's physical wounds healed, her mother's dreams soared. "I want to see my daughter thrive, to become a lawyer one day," she whispered, her hope shining bright. Even though her mother's dream of becoming a lawyer may have been deferred, but her fervent wish is to see Faeyza fulfill it one day.

Faeyza's story is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the boundless power of a mother's love. It reminds us that even in the darkest moments, there is light. And through compassion and perseverance, miracles can indeed unfold.



OCA and CFF: Partnering for Smiles and Hope



Operation Cleft is thrilled to announce a momentous partnership with Children First Foundation (CFF), aimed at providing crucial support to cleft children in Bangladesh. This collaboration signifies a significant stride forward in our mission to ensure that every child has access to life-changing surgeries and a chance at a brighter future.

For years, Operation Cleft has been dedicated to transforming the lives of children born with cleft conditions, offering free surgeries to those in need across Bangladesh. However, with the support of Children First Foundation, we are poised to expand our reach and impact even further.

After extensive discussions and collaboration, we are delighted to reveal that Children First Foundation has agreed to support 25 cleft surgeries in Bangladesh on a trial basis. This partnership marks the beginning of a promising journey, with plans to enhance our support for cleft children in Bangladesh and beyond in the future.

At Operation Cleft, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to Children First Foundation for their unwavering commitment to our shared cause. Together, we are committed to bringing hope and healing to cleft children, ensuring they receive the care and assistance they need to thrive.

Join us in making a lasting difference in the lives of these children. Together, we can create a world where every child has the opportunity to smile with confidence and live life to the fullest.

children first
foundation

<https://childrenfirstfoundation.org.au/>

In the expansive realm of humanitarian efforts, Operation Cleft approaches others with a profound message intertwined with the concept of leaving a legacy, much like sturdy piers traversing time. Just as a pier connects land and sea, Operation Cleft forges connections between past and future through its transformative surgeries for children born with cleft conditions.

Contemplating this project evokes a deep sense of reflection, akin to standing at the end of a pier, contemplating the boundless possibilities ahead.

Both Operation Cleft and the notion of legacy stand as enduring pillars, shaping lives and leaving lasting impressions on the tapestry of society. They embody humanity's resilience and the profound impact that endures through time.

So let us heed the call—to rally behind Operation Cleft's noble mission, to contemplate the legacies we wish to leave behind, and to construct bridges of hope that traverse generations. Together, let's make a difference that spans far beyond our own lifetimes.

Operation Cleft: Building Bridges of Hope and Legacy

Please visit:
www.operationcleft.org.au

Please call (03) 9877-9717 to discuss leaving a bequest to Operation Cleft Australia and how much it will help our project.

Or email to: Info@operationcleft.org.au

Giving Monthly! CHANGE A Child's Life This Year!

For the price of a single meal out each month, you hold the incredible power to enact life-altering change. With just \$30, you can become the beacon of hope for a child born into adversity in Bangladesh. Your steadfast support will directly contribute to funding the crucial corrective surgery desperately needed by those born with a cleft lip/palate, affording them the opportunity to embrace a future illuminated with promise and health.

Imagine the profound impact your generosity can wield – the transformation from pain and stigma to confidence and opportunity. With each surgery, you're not only mending physical wounds but also weaving the fabric of a brighter tomorrow, stitch by stitch.

Join us in our noble endeavor, where every dollar becomes a catalyst for profound change. Together, let's embark on a journey of compassion, resilience, and unwavering determination. Together, let's be the architects of hope, the purveyors of joy.

Your kindness has the potential to transcend boundaries and touch lives in ways you may never fully comprehend. Let's unite in our shared commitment to make a tangible difference, one surgery at a time.

Together, let's ignite smiles and lay the foundation for a future where every child can flourish. Together, let's build a world brimming with possibility and promise. Your unwavering generosity is the cornerstone upon which this vision is built.

Let us stand shoulder to shoulder, hearts entwined, as we embark on this profound journey of compassion and transformation. Your support is not just a donation; it's a lifeline, a beacon of hope in a world too often overshadowed by darkness.





UNLOCK TAX BENEFITS!

Your generosity counts. Make tax-deductible gifts over \$2 to registered Deductible Gift Recipients (DGR) and reduce your taxable income for the year. Give back and save today!

You can send a donation directly to our bank account Or, complete and send the following form in the enclosed reply envelope. Important: Please add your name as reference and e-mail your name and address to info@operationcleft.org.au so that we can provide you with a tax receipt.



I wish to donate by:

Cheque EFT to **BSB 633000**, Account No: **165147935** Account Name: **Operation Cleft Australia**

Credit Card, Please debit my Visa MasterCard for a one off donation of \$_____ OR
monthly payment of \$_____ which I can cancel at any time.

My Card Number: Expiry Date: ___ / ___

Donor's Name (s):

Address: State: POSTCODE:

Email: Contact Number: Signature:

Post this form to:
Operation Cleft Australia, PO Box 631, Box Hill VIC 3128

WILL YOU VOLUNTEER FOR ME AND MY FRIENDS ?

Drop us a line at :
info@operationcleft.org.au
Or call us on:
+613 9877 9717
+61 493 277 781
and let the transformation begin.

Attention to all compassionate souls
with a fervent desire for positive
change!

We are reaching out to invite dedicated volunteers (whom we fondly call Ambassadors) to unite with us in our noble mission. Whether you possess medical expertise, excel in fundraising efforts, or simply carry a kind and caring heart, there's a special place for you within our community. If your club or group, whether affiliated with Rotary or not, is eager to learn more about Operation Cleft and how you can contribute, let's come together and connect! Your passion and commitment can truly make a difference.

