



transformation

Find out how you transform the lives of children – Summer 2015

Advancing Newborn Care in South America



Training participants in Toronto with project lead, Dr. Sandra Fastlicht (third from right). Participants from left to right: Antonio, Lourdes, Carolina, Carolina, Boris and Rocío.

In February 2015, six medical professionals from Transforming Faces' partner organizations in Peru, Chile and Argentina arrived in snowy Toronto for our first-ever collaborative training program with the Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) and the University of Toronto Faculty of Dentistry. During the intensive three-day course, participants learned how to make and use a nasoalveolar molding (NAM) appliance.

NAM is a proven, cost-effective technique used by orthodontists to reshape the nose, gums and lips of an infant with cleft lip and palate prior to surgery. It helps reduce the severity of the cleft pre-surgery and, as a result, can significantly reduce the child's facial scarring and the need for additional surgeries. Through the training course, participants gained the skills needed to apply the NAM technique in their home countries as part of a multidisciplinary care

approach. They were each also tasked with training another professional at their respective health facilities.

In the few months since the training took place, outstanding results have been achieved. By June 2015, 11 orthodontists and paediatric dentists were already practicing the technique with 30 newborns in Peru, Chile and Argentina. According to one of the Peruvian participants, Lourdes Motta: "I'm really happy... I'm helping my patients with extraordinary results for babies under one month [of age]; for example, a patient with a gap of 11mm was retracted to 2mm."

In addition to improved patient care, the NAM initiative has yielded many unanticipated, positive results. The six committed professionals trained in Toronto continue to support each other by exchanging ideas and lessons learned. Many of them are also exploring

opportunities to increase the use of NAM throughout South America and, as a result of their efforts, community awareness on the importance of NAM has increased dramatically.

This initiative is a powerful example of how training initiatives and collaboration are improving the quality of cleft care in our partner countries. TF would like to thank everyone who made the course possible including: Dr. Sandra Fastlicht, Dr. Bryan Tompson and the amazing team at SickKids, the University of Toronto Faculty of Dentistry, and Dr. Bruno Vendittelli. We would also like to thank the training participants for their commendable commitment to this project.



A newborn patient uses the NAM appliance in Peru



Lourdes Motta and María del Rocío practice with the NAM appliance

Meet Daungkaew

Daungkaew Namwong is the only child born to her parents, Lan and Ee in Myanmar. After their separation in 2012, Daungkaew was left in the care of her grandparents in northern Thailand. Here, Daungkaew is enrolled in pre-kindergarten and receives cleft care at our partner institution, the Northern Women's Development Foundation (NWDF).

Daungkaew was admitted to our project in January 2012, and had her cleft palate repaired one year later. She attends regular assessments to monitor her development and overall, she is progressing well. Now a shy but happy 3-year-old, Daungkaew continues to receive care through NWDF's mobile speech therapy and oral hygiene camps.



SLT Exchange in Ireland

Berhane Abera, TF's assistant speech-language pathologist in Ethiopia, participated in a speech-language therapy (SLT) exchange in Ireland this May. The two-week program included visits to speech therapy facilities around Dublin, a meeting with the speech department at Trinity College Dublin,

and the chance to observe patient sessions, including paediatric feeding and vocal cord function screenings. Berhane gained essential knowledge that she will use to strengthen SLT services at our partner hospital, Yekatit 12, and the new SLT training program that has been developed for Addis Ababa University.



Triona Sweeney, Mairead O'Callaghan, Teri Cosgrove and Berhane Abera

ECO Guidelines

The first year is critical for a child born with cleft lip and palate. Without proper care, infants with oral clefts are vulnerable to abandonment, poor nutrition, illness and even death. As a result, establishing universal standards for newborn patient care is crucial.

Over the past four years, the European Cleft Organisation (ECO) has worked tirelessly to set Europe's first ever guidelines for early cleft care. TF is thrilled to announce that our friends and former colleagues at ECO, whom we funded between 2008 and 2011, have finally accomplished this goal. In February 2015, with 75% of the vote, ECO's guidelines for early cleft care were approved by the European Committee for Standardization.

The European cleft guidelines outline processes for the proper care of infants born with cleft lip and palate including diagnosis, referrals, immediate postnatal care, nutrition and support for parents. Developed with input from 16 country representatives, the cleft guidelines document is an extremely useful tool to help ensure patients receive safe, effective and consistent treatment throughout the region.

According to ECO's Executive Director, Gareth Davies, "I am delighted we now have a set of guidelines on early cleft care, agreed at a European level. These will be enormously helpful to those countries that do not have national guidelines in cleft care." Gareth hopes that, in due course, these guidelines will be adopted on a global scale.

To learn more, visit ecoonline.org

We've Moved!

Transforming Faces has moved to a new office. Please make note of our new mailing address:



637 College Street
Toronto, Ontario M6G 1B5

Beyond a Single Surgery

When Rubana was born with a cleft lip and palate, her mother Ariappa admits feeling very distressed and crying a lot. She was not aware that affordable cleft care was available until she was directed to our India partner facility, Sri Ramachandra University (SRU). Through SRU, Rubana underwent three cleft repair surgeries supported by Smile Train, and began receiving ongoing speech therapy at TF's mobile speech camps.

Now, over a decade later, Rubana is in the 7th grade and enjoys studying Tamil. Both Rubana and her mother are very happy with her progress and the quality of care she has received. Rubana notes that "before treatment, when I [spoke] nobody understood me but now I can speak clearly. I still have problems with 's' sounds [but] I am trying hard to achieve that." One day, Rubana hopes to become a police officer.



Rubana at age three (left), and in the 7th grade (right)

The Community of Practice

Speech therapy is a major part of rehabilitation for children born with cleft lip and palate. However, in many developing countries there is a severe shortage of qualified speech-language therapists (SLTs) and very limited access to formal training programs. The Community of Practice is a collaborative initiative designed to explore this challenge.

TF has partnered with SLT professionals in Ethiopia, Thailand and Bangladesh to create a network where members can share knowledge, best practices and issues, and together carve out solutions. The project also involves the creation of computer-based SLT lecture materials to be delivered at the university level in these three countries. Currently, the project is in the content development phase, and is on track to be piloted at leading universities in these countries early next year. The initiative would not be possible without the efforts of the project's lead SLT, Kim Bradley, a team of Canadian expert volunteers, and the course developer, Desire2Learn.



Community of Practice leaders from left to right: Mesay Gebrehanna Habte (Ethiopia), Dr. Supaporn Chinchai (Thailand) and Sharmin Hasnat (Bangladesh)

Fund-A-Need Surgical Equipment in Ethiopia



Mekonen Eshete, lead reconstructive surgeon at Yekatit 12, observing a craniofacial surgery in Toronto.

In Ethiopia, TF partners with Yekatit 12 Hospital, the country's only comprehensive cleft care centre. Every year, Yekatit 12 treats roughly 500 cleft patients and performs 1,000 surgeries on patients with clefts, head injuries, other craniofacial conditions and severe burns.

While the team is highly skilled, they have recently expressed frustration with the lack of safe, reliable surgical equipment needed to perform their work. To date, they have relied on mostly outdated, second-hand equipment that is increasingly hindering their ability to perform standard procedures. In response, TF has undertaken an ambitious fundraising initiative to raise over \$100,000 in funds for critical new equipment, including electro-suction, suction and X-Ray machines.

This equipment is vital to ensuring our partners are armed for success and our patients receive the highest quality care.

Thanks to the generosity of Beautiful Before & After guests, rotary clubs and foundations, we have already raised over \$19,000 towards this goal... but there is still a very long way to go!

Please consider making a donation to help transform the lives of Ethiopian medical professionals and patients. 100% of contributions will go directly to this initiative and all donations over \$200 will be matched.

To show your support, visit www.transformingfaces.org/donate or call us at 416-222-6581.



SAVE THE DATE!

Salsa for Smiles 2015 will take place October 1 at Toronto's Lula Lounge. Tickets will go on sale soon.



Annual General Meeting

TF staff and Board of Directors gathered in Collingwood from June 16-18, 2015, for our Annual General Meeting. The AGM included the formal election of our board's two newest members, Dr. Michel Grupper of medical consulting firm, Health-Co, and Dr. Ron Zuker, plastic surgeon at the Hospital for Sick Children.

TF CHAMPIONS: YOUR SUPPORT TRANSFORMS LIVES!

Noah Ripstein, 13, decided to dedicate his Bar Mitzvah to raising funds for cleft lip and palate care. Thanks to the generosity of Noah and his family and friends, he surpassed his ambitious fundraising goal of \$5,400. Congratulations Noah... you are a true TF champion!



Mobeen Husain, held a family golf tournament in June that raised over \$1,300 to support TF's international projects.

BE A TF CHAMPION!

Find out how you can become a TF champion at transformingfaces.org/fundraise

Beautiful Before and After

May 21, 2015, marked another hugely successful year for our signature event, Beautiful Before and After. Roughly 140 supporters joined us at the BMO Conference and Event Centre at First Canadian Place for a celebration of lives transformed. Thanks to your generous support and matched donations from a private foundation, this year's event raised a record \$64,984 for our international cleft care programs.

TF would like to extend a very special thank you to our event sponsor, the Abyssinian Foundation, our Host and Honorary Chair, Brendan Ashcroft, and our Guest Speakers, Dr. Sandra Fastlicht and Jeri Paul. We would also like to thank all our generous silent auction sponsors, volunteers and Fundraising Committee for helping to make the evening a huge success!

For event photos, visit on [on.fb.me/1RwVb9n](https://www.facebook.com/1RwVb9n)



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Closing the gap in cleft care. *Thanks to you.*

100% of your donation goes directly to cleft services because a private charitable foundation covers our administration costs. Donations of \$200 or more are also matched by the foundation.

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