



In our world today, 1.3 million children are born with heart defects, and 93% of those are born in countries without the resources to treat them.

Gift of Life is a Rotary based program which began its mission in 1975 by bringing one child at a time from developing countries to the USA and Canada for cardiac treatment. Since that time Gift of Life International was formed to include all other like-minded non-government organizations. This enabled the maximization of existing GOL programs like Rotary District 7090 Gift of Life, our local program, to expand the reach and accessibility for all children. Through this evolution 84 GOL affiliated programs worldwide have treated over 32,000 children from 79 countries and this year alone will provide care to more than 3,000 children with heart disease.

The strategy now is to focus on developing sustainable pediatric cardiac surgery, catheterization and aftercare programs in select countries where children can be treated. Our Core programs are in Uganda, El Salvador, Jamaica and Romania. In these GOL has worked to empower local health care professionals resulting in hope for children with heart disease in their country of birth, eliminating the issues of language, culture and the ability to have family members with them in travel to another country for the surgery.

In many countries such as Haiti, Kosovo, the Philippines and the Dominican Republic, children with heart disease rarely receive the care they need and the parents spend time searching for help while watching their children die.

Our local GOL extends from Southern Ontario through into North Eastern New York, and at this time of the year we fund raise with the slogan "Buy a Heart, Save a Heart". Milk and dark chocolate hearts are on sale during the next few weeks specifically for Valentines Day, but we do have them all year long for other occasions too. The cost is \$10 each and the chocolate is made locally with our Hagersville chocolatier My Sweet Sweet World. Show you care, have your children know that they are helping other children they may never get to meet, but are giving them life.

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