



### **What is Rotaplast International?**

Rotaplast International is non-profit humanitarian organization providing free reconstructive cleft-palate operations and treatment for children in need worldwide. Rotaplast seeks to provide long time solutions by funding and coordinating surgical missions in developing countries; training and mentoring local physicians; launching public education projects; and advancing research.

The goal of Rotaplast International is to eliminate the incidence of untreated cleft lips and palates in children worldwide by the year 2025.

### **Why is Rotary involved in Rotaplast?**

Rotaplast International, Inc. was founded in 1992 by Dr. Angelo Capozzi and then Rotary Club President Peter Lagarias in collaboration with the Rotary Club of San Francisco to facilitate a surgical program in La Serena, Chile to treat children with the cleft lip and palate anomaly who would otherwise not receive surgical intervention. This initial historic mission took place in January of 1993. In 1996, Rotaplast became a separate non-profit corporation and has since consistently expanded its number of annual missions. Since 1994, Rotary Districts and clubs throughout the United States have embraced Rotaplast International's humanitarian mission as part of their International Service work because it provides a vehicle for medical professionals and non-medical volunteers to actively engage in projects that build international friendships and promote goodwill and understanding among the peoples of the world.

Clefts of the lip and palate are among the most common of all birth defects. However in some areas of the world treatment is not common. Untreated, these children are ridiculed, rejected from society, and often deprived of an education. They are prone to serious upper respiratory problems, hearing loss, speech and dental problems.

### **How many patients have benefited from Rotaplast's work?**

Since 1993 to date, *13,703 patients have been served, and 152 medical missions have traveled to 19 different countries.*

### **How is Rotaplast funded?**

Rotaplast would not exist without funding provided by partners. Although a San Francisco-based organization, Rotaplast works nationally and internationally by partnering with **Rotary Clubs**, other organizations, and individuals across the United States, Canada and mission sites. Rotaplast receives funding through Rotary Clubs and Districts for each of the medical missions. To be recognized as a sponsor the supporting Club(s) and/or District(s) agrees to provide \$80,000-\$100,000 in funding. This amount does not cover the entire costs of a mission and the remaining funding is solicited through the Rotaplast Foundation from sources outside Rotary. Rotaplast provides logistics solicits donations of non-durable medical supplies such as sutures and anesthesia (valued at \$30,000 per mission), staffs the teams, conducts site visits, and works with the sponsors both domestically and internationally.

### **Does The Rotary Foundation fund Rotaplast International in any way?**

Other than RI Polio Plus, it is the policy of The Rotary Foundation (TRF) to not fund any medical missions of any type. However, depending on the timing of the medical mission, Rotary Clubs/Districts that participate in Rotaplast missions can and do apply and receive funds under TRF's Matching Grants program. These funds are then used to pay for medical supplies, in some cases for housing expenses, and count towards the two District's (USA and host country) contribution.

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### **Who determines where the medical missions should go?**

Rotaplast International determines where a medical mission should go and follows Rotary International guidelines to ensure the safety of the participating Rotarians and medical Team.

### **How does a medical mission to another country works?**

There needs to be a USA Rotary District willing to sponsor a medical mission and a Rotary District in another country willing to host the Rotaplast Team and provide all the support/funding required by Rotaplast International. **A Medical Mission Team travels to another country by invitation only**, working with the local Rotary District, local Rotary Clubs, hospitals, surgeons, local governments, non-government organizations and other groups to bring needed care, medical equipment and supplies.

### **How much does the USA Rotary District contribute to a medical mission?**

On an average, the participating USA Rotary District contributes between \$80,000 and \$100,000 to fund a medical mission. Each District decides how to raise the money. Our District 7430 has asked all 48 Rotary Clubs to become a Rotaplast Sustaining Members and donating a minimum of \$600 a year.

### **How much do the Rotary District and Club(s) in the other country contribute to a medical mission?**

The Rotary District and local clubs of the city/town in the host country contribute financially and in-kind. They are responsible for getting all the government permits to allow the Team in their country, securing a hospital, operating rooms, recovery rooms, pre- and post-operation patients' rooms, operating room nurses, recovery room nurses, facilities to sterilize the surgeons' operating instruments, facilities to set up a Rotaplast administrative/record keeping desk, local volunteer translators to be available in each operating room and the recovery room (usually bilingual medical students), hats and booties for the operating room area for the entire Rotaplast Team, providing housing to the entire Rotaplast Team, whether at a hotel or at other locations, all breakfasts and lunches, refreshments and most evening meals, one day of sightseeing, and in some areas, overnight accommodations for the parents of the children who have to travel 2 or 3 days to the hospital.

### **Of the money contributed by a Rotary District or club, how much goes to pay for participant non-medical Rotarians expenses?**

**None!** Non-medical volunteers (Rotarians and spouses) pay for their own transportation and personal expenses. They perform needed tasks such as instrument sterilization, translation, recovery room monitoring, and comforting families. There are approximately ten non-medical Rotary volunteers in a Team.

### **Of the money contributed by a Rotary District or club, how much goes to pay for participant medical Team expenses?**

Rotaplast pays the airfare for all medical volunteers and asks that non-medical volunteers pay for their own airfare. The size of a medical team varies depending on the number of operating rooms available. An average team is comprised of four plastic surgeons, four or five pediatric anesthesiologists, a head nurse, four operating room nurses, three recovery room nurses, two pediatricians and a professional who can counsel about prevention and diet. We also invite dentists, orthodontists, and speech pathologists to participate on our trips. These numbers are based on the availability of three or four operating rooms and an average of 100 children treated during a six-day period.

### **How much does it cost to operate a patient with cleft lip or palate?**

About \$600 USA dollars or less than \$2.00/day will change a child's life forever! Fellow Rotarians in one medical mission we can change the lives of about 80 children.

### **What causes cleft lip and palate anomalies?**

There are a number of reasons for the cleft anomaly including a genetic predisposition, diet, life style, lack of adequate vitamins especially folic acid, smoking while pregnant, and pollution. Research has shown that a genetic predisposition can be triggered by any of these factors thus increasing the chance for the cleft anomaly to appear more frequently among those who are poor.

### **Why do we see so few individuals with cleft anomalies in the United States?**

Healthcare providers and the public healthcare system subsidize the cost of reconstructive surgery for most children born with cleft lips and palates in the U.S. These programs are often not present in developing countries.