



operation Cleft™  
"Gift a smile for life"

**NEWSLETTER**  
SUMMER-2023

# RESHAPING DESTINIES: HEALING CLEFTS IN BANGLADESH







## A Heartfelt Christmas Message from the Chairman

Dear Supporters and Donors,

As we approach the festive season, I want to take a moment to express our deepest gratitude and share the impact your kindness has made through Operation Cleft.

The spirit of Christmas is one of giving and joy, and it's no different for the children whose lives we've touched. They cherish the gifts they receive, but what truly warms their hearts is the ability to give, to bring smiles and happiness to those they care about.

For nineteen years, your unwavering generosity has been a beacon of hope, transforming the lives of around 20,000 children born with cleft lips and/or palates in the most vulnerable regions of Bangladesh.

Our success is not measured in numbers alone; it's in the stories we hear from parents who share their profound emotions about the life-changing cleft surgeries we provide. They speak of the incredible transformation they witness in their child's appearance and the everlasting joy they experience when they see their child smile. Your contributions have brought hope and happiness that will last a lifetime.

Cleft and palate surgery is a complex and delicate procedure, heavily reliant on the skill, wisdom, and experience of our surgeons. This work is nothing short of life-saving, as underweight infants cannot undergo surgery, and the consequences are dire, with severe feeding difficulties, infection risks, and malnutrition. We owe our

gratitude to the talented surgeons who make this life-changing work possible.

The challenges of post-pandemic have been felt by all, but they have weighed even more heavily on the cleft-affected children and families we support in Bangladesh. Your continued commitment has been a lifeline to these families in their time of need.

Because of your kindness and generosity, around 2000 children have received life-changing surgery in the past year alone. Your continued support remains a beacon of hope and a source of strength for those we serve.

As we celebrate this special time of year, I want to wish you a Christmas filled with joy and laughter, spent with your loved ones. May the coming year bring you good health and a sense of fulfillment, knowing the difference you've made in the lives of many.

Thank you for your unwavering support, and I look forward to continuing our journey together in the new year.

Warmest wishes,



Bruce McEwen  
Chair  
Operation Cleft Australia Foundation



# We Mourn

Operation Cleft Mourns the Loss of our Beloved Board Member, Geoff Limmer

We offer our deepest condolences on the passing of Geoff Limmer. His dedication and indelible contributions to Operation Cleft will forever be remembered, guiding us as we carry forward his mission.



On behalf of the board members of Operation Cleft Australia Foundation, it is with profound sadness that we share the heartbreaking news of the passing of our beloved friend and colleague, Geoff Limmer. Geoff departed from us on November 4 around 5.00 pm in a hospital in Canberra.

Geoff was more than just a board member; he was a pillar of support and dedication to our cause. His unwavering commitment to Operation Cleft was truly remarkable. He was a passionate advocate for our mission. Geoff's contributions have left an indelible mark on our organisation, and his absence will

be deeply felt. In this moment of loss, our hearts are heavy with grief, and our thoughts and sympathies go out to Geoff's family and friends. We share in their sorrow and hope they find solace in knowing that Geoff's legacy of passion and dedication to making a difference will forever inspire us.

Geoff, you will be dearly missed, but your spirit and contributions will continue to guide us as we carry forward the mission you held so close to your heart.

Rest in peace, dear friend.

## Story Behind Photographs

Geoff's partner, Anne Fuller, kindly shared the following photographs with us, and she shared a heart-touching story regarding Picture 2.

Geoff, with a profound appreciation for the value of books and an inherent love for reading maps, took action when the unfortunate event of the Puckapunyal Primary School burning down occurred. Together, Geoff and I reached out to local opportunity shops, earnestly requesting them to contribute

thoughtfully chosen books. Our aim was to assist in restocking the shelves of the new library that would replace what was lost in the fire.

Having obtained permission from the school as well as parents, we proudly included a photo capturing this collaborative effort in a Rotary report at the time. This story reflects not only the resilience of a community coming together but also Geoff's enduring commitment to fostering education and the love of reading.—ANNE FULLER (Geoff's beloved partner)

1. Geoff Presenting Operation Cleft Australia in a Rotary Club; 2. Geoff in front of the Puckapunyal Primary School with students; 3. Geoff and his beloved partner Anne Fuller during the Order of Australia (OAM) recognition ceremony; 4. Geoff Presented Paul Harris Fellow recognition to John and Linda Watson for their generous support to Operation Cleft Australia.



1



2



3



4



A close-up photograph of a woman wearing a red headscarf, looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. She is holding a young child with a visible cleft lip and palate. The child is looking slightly to the side. In the top right corner, there are three overlapping hexagons in teal, red, and yellow colors.

# Finding Hope in the Midst of Challenges

**I**n the tender embrace of December 2022, little Asmaul Husna, fondly known as Asma, graced the world amidst the cacophony of a house undergoing renovation. Born into the arms of Rohingya parents from Myanmar, navigating the labyrinth of uncertainty in the UNHCR Rohingya camp in Ukha, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh Asma's entry into the world unfolded as a symphony of challenges and unexpected turns.

The urgency to reach the Medical Centre became a futile race against time, and Asma entered the world swiftly, unveiling bilateral complete cleft lip, alveolus, and cleft palate. The birth attendant, while noting the physical aspect as a 'deformity of the nose,' couldn't fathom the depth of the emotional journey that awaited.

Devastation and a chorus of varied comments enveloped Asma's mother, yet in the midst of this storm, she discovered an

anchor in her unwavering faith. Seeing her child's condition not as a burden but as a divine gift, she embraced a profound belief that Allah had chosen them for an extraordinary journey.

Fast forward to October 12, 2023, a date etched in hope, Asma underwent the transformative surgery for primary cleft palate repair in a Operation Cleft Surgical camp at Fuad Al Khateeb Hospital, Cox's Bazar led by our beloved surgeon Dr. Al Masum Ziaul Haque and his dedicated team.

As Asma's parents traverse an uncertain path, their hearts are buoyed by hope. Additional surgeries lay ahead, each a stepping stone towards the dream of full correction. As the narrative unfolds, it becomes a testament not only to resilience but to the indomitable power of hope, love, and the unwavering spirit of Operation Cleft. Join us on this emotional journey and witness Asma's complete transformation.





## Ayman's Journey: A Cleft Success Tale

In the heart of Shikarpur, Naogaon Sadar, Rajshahi Division, Bangladesh Ayman Ali Hadi's story unfolds—a tale of resilience born with a left complete cleft lip and palate.

Ayman's parents, Muhammad Kajol Rashid and his wife, faced uncertainties until they discovered Operation Cleft's surgical camp at Prime Hospital, Naogaon. Under our leading surgeon Professor Dr. Muhammad Quamruzzaman's skilled hands, Ayman underwent successful surgeries on the 20th of February for Cleft Lip and 14th of September 2023 for cleft palate, achieving full correction.

In a heartfelt interview, Rashid expressed gratitude for the positive change in societal perception post-surgery. "We are not just accepted; we are embraced by society," he shared. Operation Cleft's unwavering support not only mended Ayman's physical deformity but also healed the emotional scars, bringing immeasurable joy to their family.

Ayman's success story, ignited by community support and compassion, is an invitation for Australian communities to join hands. Through generosity, more children like Ayman can embrace a brighter, healthier future in Bangladesh. Let's create smiles and inspire hope together.





# Spread Joy and Love with Operation Cleft's 'Christmas Cards'

This holiday season, choose Operation Cleft's Christmas cards and be a part of a meaningful journey. With your purchase, you're not just sending holiday cheer; you're helping us change lives. Join us in spreading joy, love, and transformation this Christmas.

Every card you buy brings us closer to creating more smiles and brighter futures. Let's make this season one of giving, sharing, and changing lives. Purchase your Operation Cleft Christmas cards today and be a part of something truly special.

Thank you for your support, and may your holiday season be filled with warmth, love, and the knowledge that you're making a difference.

To ensure you get your cards before Christmas, please make sure you order your physical cards before December 16th.



Scan this QR code to collect your card or  
Click on the link below:  
<https://www.operationcleft.org.au/shop/>



## A Legacy of Compassion: Bequesting Change with Operation Cleft Australia

As we celebrate the festive season, your steadfast support has been a beacon of hope for countless children with cleft lips and palates.

Your kindness has transformed their challenges into brighter futures. Consider leaving a lasting legacy through a bequest to Operation Cleft, creating smiles for generations. Your generosity ensures our mission endures, providing opportunities for a healthy, happy life for future generations.

This festive season, as you enjoy time with loved ones, reflect on the children still waiting for a better life. Your bequest is a gift of lasting hope, a testament to your commitment to a better world. Operation Cleft is here to support you in this significant decision. Together, we can give the gift of a brighter tomorrow for generations.

Thank you for being part of this journey, and warm wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Your compassion continues to inspire.

Please visit:

[www.operationcleft.org.au](http://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](mailto:Info@operationcleft.org.au)



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

For just \$30 a month, you have the power to make a life-changing impact. Your support can fund the much-needed corrective surgery for a child born with a cleft lip/palate in Bangladesh, giving them a chance for a brighter and healthier future. Join us in making a difference one surgery at a time. Your generosity can transform a child's life.

Let's come together to create smiles and build a better tomorrow.

You can donate safely online following the link below:  
<https://www.operationcleft.org.au/online-donation-widget/>

Or, Scan this QR Code







## KEEN ON MAKING A LASTING IMPACT IN A CHILD'S LIFE?

Your chance is here! Securely contribute online. Snap this QR Code or hit up the link: <https://www.operationcleft.org.au/online-donation-widget/>

**Or, 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](mailto: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 ?

### CALLING ALL HEARTS WITH A PASSION FOR CHANGE!

We're on the lookout for devoted volunteers (Ambassadors) to join our mission. Whether you wield medical expertise, ace fundraising, or just have a caring spirit, we've got a spot for you. If your club or group (Rotary or not) craves insight into Operation Cleft, let's connect!

Drop us a line at  
[info@operationcleft.org.au](mailto:info@operationcleft.org.au),  
and let the transformation begin.

