How much is a child’s life worth?

Like you, ROMAC believes a child’s life is priceless. That’s one of the many reasons why we organise life changing and life saving surgery for children from countries where, sadly, too many would remain outcasts or die in their often remote villages.

Children like baby Tavaleana, left, born without a working oesophagus who would have starved to death. Fortunately ROMAC urgently flew him here for intravenous feeding until he was strong enough to undergo a series of life-saving operations.

ROMAC has proudly changed and saved the lives of well over 350 underprivileged children with the support of an amazing group of caring surgeons and their teams. This compassion coupled with minimal overheads - no office, no paid staff - ensures that every dollar donated is worth many times more, and is spent supporting businesses in our local communities where our local hospitals are located.

Please help Rotarians continue their humanitarian work with a generous, tax deductible donation now, because our underprivileged children often can’t afford to wait.

Your personal and club donations will save even more deserving children’s lives. Thank you.

Baby Bakita’s amazing journey

Our Perth ROMAC team had a wonderful experience with two year old heart patient Bakita and her mother Rita. As mother and baby were not able to speak English, the team initially had a difficult job in communicating.

As Bakita and Rita arrived with very little clothing a shopping spree was enjoyed at the Belmont Forum. Luckily a Tetum speaking lady (Diana) was able to help as interpreter.

As Bakita had an Echo Cardiogram at Princess Margaret Hospital and then saw Dr Stephen Shipton who explained all aspects of the surgery and the options available.

Diana explained everything to Rita, as the hole in Bakita’s heart was larger than first seen on information received from East Timor. Further X-rays were necessary.

And then, the big day, surgery to correct Bakita’s heart was continued inside...

Gelina’s wonderful result

Five months old Timorese baby Gelina arrived with her mother Marcelina with a complex heart problem and was immediately admitted to Brisbane’s Mater Children’s Hospital. Tests were carried out under the guidance of Dr Rob Justo and surgery was commenced soon after.

Gelina spent a night in Paediatric Intensive Care and the next day was off all supports and back in a ward by mid morning. Her improvement was noticeable daily. Gelina was not baptised continued inside...
Rotary rides for ROMAC

ROMAC’s District 9640 recently had great support from two bike rides. Firstly the Rotary Club of Parkwood held its annual GC100 Bike Ride. Riders had the choice of either the long Gold Coast hinterland or shorter suburbs one. The second was organised by the Rotary Club of Murwillumbah Central’s member Tony Worrad. Both Tony, above, and his riding companion Ray Chatt rode for seven days from Tweed Heads to Singleton. They received many donations during their long ride, including The Good Guys sponsorship and $500 from Singleton Diggers. Many Rotarians and other bike riders joined in on various segments of the ride.

ROMAC’s Elaine Morgan brought Indonesian sisters Rafika and Uswatun to the Murwillumbah Central’s ride start. They were here for further treatment for the severe burns they suffered during an Indonesian earthquake when aged 7 and 8. Now aged 13 and 15 they were brought to Brisbane for treatment with Burns Specialist Professor Roy Kimble. “They underwent 125 procedures over 22 months,” Elaine said, “They are beautiful girls and so brave.” Their procedures have been very painful but fortunately large skin grafts were not required during this visit.

Jill Ellis, District 9640 ROMAC Chair, was presented, right, with a cheque for $4,000 from the Parkwood ride. “It was a fantastic effort by both Clubs, and their enthusiastic riders were truly inspiring.”

A complex heart

Rexly was 15 months old when brought from Vanuatu to Auckland’s Starship Hospital for cardiac surgery. On his arrival the Cardiologists decided that an echo under sedation was required and, after an hour of scanning, the consensus was that the operation should proceed. Rexly came through his surgery wonderfully well. His weight went up by 25% and he only needed two nights in Paediatric Intensive Care.

Rexly and his mother Rintette were guests at Ronald McDonald House for his recuperation.

Roberta returns

Roberta was originally burnt in Fiji in 2011 and was treated here by Dr John Harvey, who subsequently travelled to Fiji to treat Roberta. In 2012 and 2013 ROMAC brought her back to Sydney’s Westmead Hospital for follow-up treatment.

Nothing is impossible for the ROMAC team and, that day, a baptism was organized at the Mater. Instantly we had a more comfortable Marcelina.

After her period of recuperation baby Gelina was released to return home to Dili.

A very positive outcome and another baby’s life saved by ROMAC that are desperate cases requiring bold decisions.

Gelina from front page...

and a strong request for this to be done came from Marcelina.

A great outcome and Roberta returned home to Fiji looking forward to a new future.

ROMAC is most appreciative of Dr Harvey’s expertise and dedication in burns treatment.

Linda from front page...

on three days later to remove a huge brain hernia in her skull above her eye. On arrival with her mother, Linda’s face was covered with a scarf to hide her baby’s appearance.

The neurosurgical team at Starship Hospital, lead by Dr Peter Heppner, had a big challenge but their professionalism and surgical experience was superb. It was a real thrill for Talia to see the growth removed, even though it was not possible to restore sight in Linda’s right eye. Linda will need to have reconstructive surgery and the ROMAC team will bring her back in 2-3 years for cosmetic work on her face. A very uplifting story and a very happy mother and her baby have now returned home.

Bakita from front page...

heart at Princess Margaret Hospital. ROMAC’s Joan Varian accommodated Bakita and Rita for a few nights and rose to great heights in making a Timorese meal for her visitors. Bakita’s successful surgery and recovery time was amazing and all involved in her care were very grateful to ROMAC for her treatment. Mother and baby were accommodated very comfortably initially at Ronald McDonald House.

ROMAC’s Regional manager, Peter Snell, joined Joan, Rita and Bakita at the airport to say the final goodbyes.

Gelina from front page...

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