

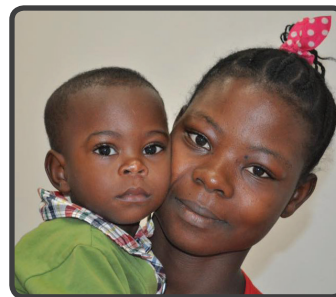


A Long-Awaited Return to Liberia

CSI has completed a productive and emotional return to Liberia after a three-year absence due to the West African Ebola crisis. Resources have been severely limited in Liberia since the second civil war ended in 2003, made only more drastic following the Ebola crisis. According to the Liberia Medical and Dental Council, there are currently fewer than 300 medical doctors to serve the entire country's population of 4.3 million.

In January, 23 CSI volunteers and dozens of Firestone staff and volunteers gathered at Firestone Duside Medical Center in Harbel, Liberia, to begin a week of surgeries and education that would change the lives of individual children, as well as the community. Some families traveled as much as four days to reach us.

This successful surgical trip would not have been possible without the strong partnership and support CSI receives from Firestone Natural Rubber Company. CSI began a close partnership with Firestone Natural Rubber in 2010, which allowed us to return to Duside Hospital on five occasions with their support. Since then, 123 CSI medical volunteers have screened more than 1,000 patients and performed surgery on 568 children. CSI volunteers also work closely with our local colleagues to provide surgical, nursing, and general medical training and education on a wide range of topics.



Mother and son on screening day.

With daily lectures and bedside training, this trip had a special focus on teaching and education for our Liberia healthcare partners from around the region. **More than 100 patients were screened, and 57 surgeries and 15 other procedures/observations were completed** – all accomplished side-by-side with our local partners. **More than 400 Liberian healthcare professionals attended** lectures and training sessions and participated in hands-on bedside training.



Laura educating the nursing staff.

In addition to working all week at the hospital, many team members chose to use their one rest day participating in a community health initiative. Team members visited Frances Gaskin Orphanage, where they administered anti-parasitic (deworming) to 75 children. Parasitic infections are among the most common infections in developing countries, significantly impairing nutrition, which of course can lead to many other health problems. Thanks to our relationship with Orphan Relief and Rescue, we were able to return to the orphanage again this year. The team also visited the village of Cotton-Tree at the request of the village



Young patient waiting for surgery.

leader to administer anti-parasitic medication to community residents. The group was enthusiastically welcomed by about 1,500 eager children and adults!

The busy week ended with a moving closing ceremony, attended by the Liberian Vice President and the U.S. ambassador to Liberia. A Liberian drum and dance group provided entertainment. Expressions of gratitude were shared by members of the CSI team and Liberian hospital and government officials. The team noted it was hard to discern who was more grateful – them or us!



Medication is followed by lollipops at the orphanage.

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CALENDAR

Thanh Hoa, Vietnam

March 9-19, 2017

Hermosillo, Mexico

October 6-11, 2017

Bahir Dar, Ethiopia

Fall 2017

Harbel, Liberia

January 2018

Keep up with us when we're abroad!

Follow the CSI blog on our website:

www.childrenssurgeryintl.com



REGISTER NOW FOR THE CSI GALA

Saturday, April 8, 2017

Radisson Blu,
Mall of America

Join Gala co-hosts Dr. Paul Melchert and James Zimmerman at the biggest night of the year for CSI.

Sip specialty cocktails, listen to fabulous music, visit our one-of-a-kind photo booth and more, all while helping to support CSI's mission through the silent and live auctions, direct donations and other activities.

It's Gala Time – Come Fly with Us!

The 13th annual CSI Gala is Saturday, April 8, at the Radisson Blu, Mall of America. Each year, volunteers, friends, healthcare providers and community members gather to celebrate, honor and support the work of Children's Surgery International.

The Gala is our largest fundraising event. Heartfelt thanks to our Premier Sponsor, Firestone Natural Rubber Company, and Gold Sponsors Lubrication Technologies, Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota, Medical Arts, and Pediatric Surgical Associates for their support!

Join Gala co-hosts Dr. Paul Melchert and James Zimmerman at the biggest night of the year for CSI. Sip specialty cocktails, listen and dance to fabulous music, visit our one-of-a-kind photo booth and more, all while helping to support CSI's mission through the silent and live auctions, direct donations and other activities.

Registration is now open! Purchase your Gala tickets online or contact the CSI office.

We're excited to introduce online and mobile bidding to our event this year. No more standing over bid sheets to monitor your items. You'll be able to search and browse auction items, place bids, get real-time updates about the status of your items and increase your bids – all from your smartphone, tablet or a bidding station at the event.



We can't wait to see you on April 8.
Together, we are changing lives and strengthening communities, one child at a time.

Lube-Tech Employees "Making Tomorrow Better Than Today"



Daniel and his father

Thanks to the incredible generosity of the employees at Lubrication Technologies and the company's Bame Foundation, half a day of surgery in Liberia was fully funded.

Lube-Tech and CSI came together through Zinda Schafer, whose family has personally experienced the heartbreak, challenges and medical costs associated with a cleft lip and palate. The Bame Foundation and Lube-Tech were so moved by Zinda's story, they wanted to get involved. They learned that in developing countries children born with abnormalities are shunned, kept at home and not allowed to go to school, or in some cases abandoned. They learned that a relatively routine surgery may change all of that! And after hearing about CSI, they wanted to help our incredible volunteers travel halfway around the world to perform life-changing surgeries and teach local doctors how to do the same.

Lube-Tech made a commitment to support CSI's work. They asked their employees to get involved and give and, did they give! For instance, when Lube-Tech employee Cathy Morse heard about the initiative, she decided to host a luncheon where employees made an at-will donation in support of CSI to participate. She hoped to raise \$750 to sponsor one child's surgery. Thanks to her compassion and creativity, along with the generosity of her colleagues, Cathy surpassed her goal and raised a total of \$1,000...all at one luncheon!

With this financial support from Lube-Tech, CSI was able to focus on providing life-changing surgeries and critical professional training in Liberia. Read *Stories of Hope* below about some of the children and families whose lives were changed in Liberia thanks to Lube-Tech's generosity.

"Your compassion and caring is what makes our company different, 'making tomorrow better than today.' You raised \$3,000 during the Half a Day of Smiles campaign, and Bame Foundation will contribute \$4,500, making the total tally \$7,500. These children and their families will no longer be ostracized or feel ashamed, and their quality of life has been transformed. A better community and world starts with us. Thank you for making the decision to help."

– Chris Bame, CEO, Lube-Tech



Marie



Pauline and her mother



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 to our 2017 Sponsors!

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Stories of Hope from Families Helped by CSI and Lube-Tech



Oscar

Imagine the desperation of a mother who hitchhiked with her 1-year-old son from their home three hours away to Hermosillo hoping to receive surgery for a cleft lip. Oscar is one of five children whose family lives on a salary of \$50/week. Due to a last-minute family emergency, he and his mother missed the CSI screening day. Frantic, but undeterred, she left home with Oscar in her arms. She had no money, and only some juice, water and a small bag. That night the two of them slept outdoors and started hitchhiking toward Hermosillo the next morning. They were picked up by a kindhearted taxi driver who took them as far as the bus station. From there another taxi driver brought them to the hospital. We were pleased to be able to put Oscar on our surgery schedule.

Habakkuk

Habakkuk's cleft lip surgery was so successful and his appearance so transformed even his mother almost didn't recognize him afterward. In the recovery room after surgery, she fed him his first real bottle of formula, and he took it like a champ. Habakkuk and his mother traveled more than four hours to Duside Hospital – she is so grateful: "Thank you, thank you!" she said.



Daniel

Five-year-old Daniel had an inguinal hernia. He and his father arrived at Firestone Duside Hospital after traveling two days by bus and spending all their savings on travel expenses. Daniel's parents can't find steady work (unemployment in Liberia is at least 75%) and any money they make goes toward food and housing. They've been saving for three years, hoping CSI would one day return after the Ebola crisis ended. Daniel's surgery was successful, and he will live pain free. His dad, Stephen, says, "Thank you to the whole family of Lube-Tech for coming here and helping him."




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