



# Children's Surgery International

Changing lives, one child at a time

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## Save the Date!

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Minneapolis  
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More on our website:  
[www.childressurgeryintl.org](http://www.childressurgeryintl.org)



## A Partnership for Liberia

By Dan Adomitis

Firestone Natural Rubber Company and Liberia have partnered in the production of natural rubber for more than 80 years. Working together, the company and the Liberian people have made rubber the nation's second largest export. Firestone Natural Rubber Company is deeply committed to providing jobs, education, housing, infrastructure, health care services and environmental stewardship to ensure Liberia's success – now and into the future.

The partnership has not always been easy. In 1989, Charles Taylor and his NPFL rebel group launched a rebellion against the government of Liberia. Civil war ensued among various tribal groups and the country suffered an estimated 300,000 deaths before the fighting ended in 2003. In addition to the human carnage, the infrastructure of the country was laid to waste. Most buildings, including hospitals, were looted, burned and destroyed. At the end of the war the nation was left without power, water and sanitation, and most foreign investors and businesses left the country. Today, about 80% of Liberians remain unemployed.

Firestone's operations were not spared the war. The factory, worker housing, schools, power transmission, vehicles and hospital were severely damaged. However, despite the challenges, Firestone Natural Rubber Company has remained committed to the country and the people of Liberia and has invested more than \$100 million in projects.

Company President Dan Adomitis recalls the daunting task of rebuilding the hospital. "I was not sure how long it would take to rebuild the 300 bed hospital or, frankly, if it was even possible. We worked almost three years and when the work was completed, I realized the real work of rebuilding the skills and equipment necessary to serve the community was just beginning."

During this time, Adomitis searched for ways to move the hospital to a higher standard of care. He determined the hospital would need more than simple business management. It would need the mentorship of health care professionals in the United States to model and teach modern



*Patients and families waiting to be screened*

technique and technology. "I thought a sister hospital in the U.S. might be part of the solution," recalls Adomitis. But he knew it could be a long process.

It was then he received a phone call from Dr. Peter Melchert of CSI. Melchert was surveying the few healthcare facilities in Liberia for a future mission and contacted Adomitis to see if there was any interest in a partnership.

"I was elated to receive Peter's call," said Adomitis. "I had hoped CSI could help direct me to the resources I needed to improve the hospital. Ultimately, it was the resource!"

*(continued on page 2)*



(continued from page 1)

CSI's first mission to Firestone Duside hospital in 2010 was greeted by hundreds of people seeking surgical help lined up outside the hospital. "It was truly overwhelming," recalls Adomitis. At its close, CSI had performed a record number of surgeries in a single mission.

In November 2013, CSI and Firestone hosted their fifth mission at Duside. This mission marked over 600 hundred children who have received life-changing surgeries through CSI. Through this partnership, Firestone Duside has elevated its standard of care in the community. More importantly, the staff of Firestone Duside has gained valuable knowledge and skills. Dr. Lawrence Sherman, Chief Surgeon at the Firestone Medical Center, can now independently perform cleft lip and palate surgeries. Adomitis notes, "With each mission, the partnership deepens and the CSI team continues to take on more challenging cases. I view this as a sign of confidence in the Firestone staff to continue the patient care after the mission is over."

**"The CSI mission has not only made the children of Liberia better, it has made us better, says Adomitis, and that is 'good business' in anyone's book."**

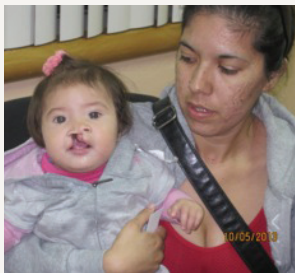
## A Mother's Love

By Lora Stege Koppel

In October a young mother arrived at CIMA Hospital with her 5 month old baby. She wanted her baby, who had been born with a cleft lip and palate, to be seen by the CSI medical team. The young woman was poor and spoke no English but was determined to get help for her daughter.

As I listened to her story I was reminded of the power of a mother's love. To get the daughter the care she needed, the mom needed to travel by bus from her village 7 hours away from the hospital. I asked her how she managed to get to the hospital having no money. She told me that with the help of St Andrew's Clinic, she made flower bouquets, collected pots and pans, and cooked tacos. She then held a raffle, sold tickets and was able to make just enough money for the bus ticket.

Camilla had surgery the next day; mom could barely wait to bring her home and show everyone. Another wonderful moment for a mother and her child.



Camilla and her mother, before and after the surgery

## CSI in Bangladesh: An Ongoing Partnership

There is considerable excitement in the air at Children's Surgery International as we prepare for our 3rd surgical mission to Rangpur, Bangladesh. The journey began in 2010 when Fazly Alahi, a native of Bangladesh currently living and working in Minnesota with his family, contacted CSI here in Minnesota. He had a dream to make a connection between the U.S. and Bangladesh that could bring much-needed medical care and education to his home country.



The hospital in Bangladesh.

Building on the success of our first two missions, our team of 25 will travel to Bangladesh in February 2014 from various parts of the U.S. including Pennsylvania, Arizona, Virginia, Minnesota, North Carolina, Massachusetts, and Maryland. They will bring with them their incredible talents, enthusiasm to heal, and willingness to teach as well as learn from others.

The three surgeons joining us all specialize in Pediatric Facial Plastic and Reconstructive surgery. Other volunteers include logistics specialists, nurses, anesthesiologists, nurse anesthetists, operating room specialists, biomedical engineer, plus an interpreter. We are so fortunate to have yet another amazing group of volunteers willing to share their time and talents.



Surgeons at work during the mission.

## St. Kate's Students Choose CSI for Social Entrepreneurship Project

CSI is always looking for ways to partner with organizations throughout the Twin Cities and beyond.



ST. CATHERINE UNIVERSITY

Our partnership with 3M was made through Board Member Con Nguyen. Through Con, a connection with St. Catherine's was established and we were lucky enough to work this fall with students in the Social Entrepreneurship program.

Throughout the course, the students do a market analysis and assess and analyze the organization's current branding, sales, operations, funding, and financial projections. They then put together a formal proposal on how the organization can use social networks and other multi-media to promote and enhance the organization's visibility in their sphere or industry.

The course is sponsored in part by 3M, and when looking at non profit organizations for the class CSI was selected. The 11 students who worked on this project presented their final summary to the CSI Board in December.

Thanks to Con for the opportunity to partner with such a respected and well established institution, and to the students of St. Kate's for their phenomenal work and valuable information which will help us as we expand our presence in the non-profit world.

## Riley Nelson Supports CSI With Art

For all he's contributed over the years, Riley Nelson could be considered CSI's resident artist, or more specifically, "caricature-ist".

Riley continues to delight the CSI community, not only with his talents as an artist but also for his commitment and contributions to the children CSI aids.

A heartfelt "Thank You" to Riley and his continued support!



## News From the CSI Board of Directors

### CSI Remembers Dr. Richard "Dick" Marnach

*Excerpts from Lynn Randall's tribute*

It is with heavy hearts that CSI says "goodbye" to a dear friend, mentor, and peer. Dr. Marnach, or Dick as his peers referred to him, was a founding member of Children's Surgery International. Much more than his impressive resume, Dick represented the spirit of CSI in his continuous dedication to the wellness of children around the world.



Dr. Richard Marnach, MD  
May 19, 1954 – May 3, 2013

Throughout his tenure, Dick served on 30 medical missions spanning three continents, and had great impact transforming the lives of hundreds of children from Mexico to Liberia. His greatest desire was to provide healing and education towards the wellbeing of others.

Dr. Marnach once said that "the advantage of medicine is that you're relating to people. You're taking care of people. That's the way I work, the way I see life."

To Dick, success was not in financial achievement but rather "using our talents in the best way possible to make the world a better place." He firmly believed he had accomplished that, and I know that he did too, and so much more.

### Welcome Linda Sedgwick and Norie Wilson

Last fall CSI welcomed Linda Sedgwick, RN, CPNP and Norie Wilson, RN to the Board of Directors. Both women have served on CSI mission trips and have been on the Annual Passport to Smiles Gala Committee. Their established involvement made them ideal candidates for and wonderful additions to our board.



Both women have wonderful ideas and great energy; we are excited to start a new year with them on the Board!

For more on our new and existing Board Members, visit our website:  
<http://www.childrensurgeryintl.org/who-we-are/board-staff>



top: Linda Sedgwick  
bottom: Norie Wilson



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We will be publishing our donor list annually. Donations made after December 1, 2013 will be recognized in 2014.



## The 9th Annual Passport to Smiles Gala...



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**For more information or to make a donation, call or write to:**

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**You can also make a donation online at**  
[www.childrenssurgeryintl.org](http://www.childrenssurgeryintl.org)

## Another Successful Passport to Smiles Gala

The 9th Annual Passport to Smiles Gala was again one for the books. Each year we fill more tables with new faces and deepen our partnerships with long-standing supporters. And this translates directly into being able to affect more lives.

We thank all of you who were able to be there with us either in physical presence or in spirit. If you weren't able to join us this year, make sure to mark you calendars for next year!

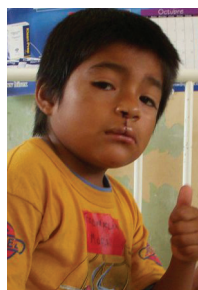
**SAVE THE DATE**

**10<sup>th</sup> Annual Passport to Smiles Gala**

**May 3, 2014**

**Millennium Hotel - Minneapolis**

## Getting Social: Stay connected with CSI



In the past few months CSI has revamped our social media strategy as we strive to spread the word and inform more people about who we are and what we do.

If you haven't "Liked" us yet, head over to our Facebook page and give us a "thumbs up". And be sure to check out our mission blog for real-time mission updates!