



## In this Issue

CSI Travels to Bangladesh	1
Welcome, Dr. Sidman	2
CSI Welcomes New Medical Director, David Tetzlaff	3
Thank You to Departing Board Members	3
Partner Program: Vietnam	4
Edina Couple Transform Young Lives	4
2015 Mission Calendar	5
Thank You to CSI Donors	6-7

## CSI Team Travels to Bangladesh for Teaching Mission

In 2010 Fazly Alahi, a native of Bangladesh currently living and working in Minnesota with his family, contacted Children's Surgery International. He had a dream to make a connection between the United States and Bangladesh that could bring much-needed medical care and education to his home country. After a site visit, CSI chose Rangpur Community Medical College Hospital in the northern region of the country.



*Fazly Alahi*

The first surgical mission traveled to Rangpur in 2011. The trip was a great success, performing many cleft-related procedures and identifying the educational needs of local professionals. CSI's partnership with Fazly and his family, as well as the Rangpur Community Medical College Hospital, provided crucial support to our team. The CSI medical team worked closely alongside local professionals, teaching and learning from one another. A second successful mission was completed in 2013.

CSI hopes to send two mission teams to Bangladesh in 2015. Our teams will focus on promotion of self-sufficiency through hands-on training, education, and collaboration with local health professionals. This year, CSI volunteer surgeons and nurses will implement site-specific educational curriculum during our stay in Rangpur. After departing, close follow-up with our Bangaldeshi colleagues will take place to support them as they advance their skills.

As this issue of the CSI newsletter goes to print, we are closely following political tensions in Bangladesh, with the support of Fazly Alahi and our Bangaldeshi partners. On the first anniversary of a boycotted parliamentary election, transportation blockages and sometimes violent protests have arisen which may alter our scheduled February mission.

The 2015 team includes: Fazly Alahi, Aliza Ameen, Dorothy Barr, John Erlandson, Amy Erlandson, Thomas Fansler, Ziporah Gathuya, Amy Hassenstab, John Hehre, Jesse Hennum, Katherine Houle, Beth



Janeczko, Charlee Kimmes, Heather Kohs, Saira Mitha, Nolan Morice, Amanda Motter, Lloyd Nagbe, Wendy Noble, Rajanyah Petersson, Ellen Reynolds, Maria Rubin, Donna Schroeder, Andrew Scott, Linda Sedgwick and Arthur Treger.

## save the date

**The 11th Annual Gala  
Saturday April 18, 2015**

**Millennium Hotel  
Minneapolis**

*join us.*

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Inspired, Passionate Speakers  
and More!**

Watch for your invitation in March.  
Online registration opens February 10.

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[www.childrenssurgeryintl.org](http://www.childrenssurgeryintl.org)



## Welcome Back, Dr. Jim Sidman!

Children's Surgery International is honored to welcome Jim Sidman, MD, back to our Board of Directors. Jim was one of the founding Board Members at CSI in 2001. He is the Medical Director of Children's ENT and Facial Plastic Surgery at Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota and is Professor of Otolaryngology and Pediatrics at the University of Minnesota.

Jim has a passion for international health and promotion of sustainability in developing countries. He shared with us some thoughts about CSI and sustainability:

### How does CSI work to promote sustainability at international mission sites?

CSI is adopting a mission model in which a major goal is to train host country doctors, nurses, anesthesia professionals, and technicians to perform their roles to U.S. medical standards. This model allows the host country health providers to actually perform the work under the supervision of CSI professionals, and not simply observe. While the workday may be slowed a bit with this emphasis, the resulting sustainability and self-sufficiency is worth it because more children in need will be served.

Of course, it takes more than one mission to accomplish this, and fewer children may be treated per mission, but sustainability comes from the local medical teams' ability to independently provide surgical care for children in need. I learned in my Peace Corps service that our goal should be to put ourselves out of business! This only happens when teaching and training are a priority.



Dr. Jim Sidman, MD

### Are local nurses and other health professionals being trained as well?

CSI nurses and anesthesiology professionals have been informally teaching local professionals during missions for years. Under this more traditional surgical mission model, more surgical cases are performed, which requires the anesthesia and nursing staff to be quick and efficient. We know that teaching often isn't quick, or necessarily efficient.

We are taking this teaching to a new level in February when CSI launches an education initiative that brings country-specific curriculum to Bangladesh. Considerable time will be spent training nurses, anesthesia professionals, as well as surgeons while we are there, with a goal of building on the foundation on return missions.

CSI recognizes there will be challenges related to this education initiative. A sometimes high turnover rate of local professionals, high numbers of children and families seeking care, and individual goals of the countries we visit can all pose challenges.

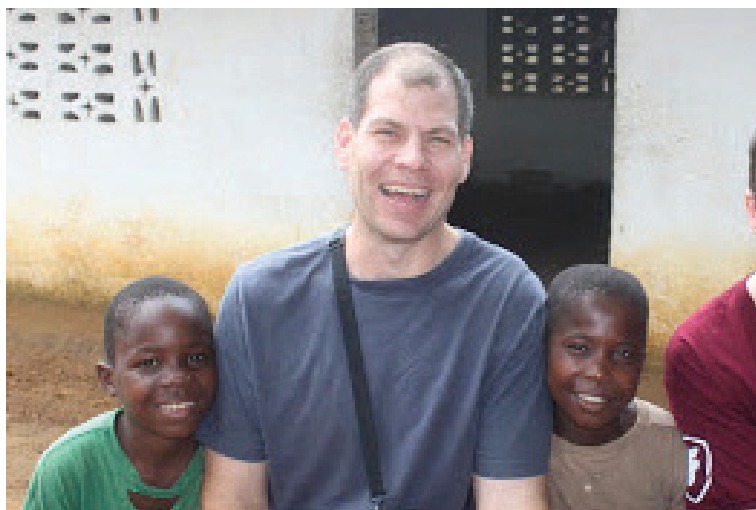
### How does promotion of sustainability affect the wider communities in the regions CSI visits?

One of the best examples of the broad-based effects of teaching have been seen in Ghana, where CSI has had several missions. There we trained a small cadre of surgeons to do cleft lip and palate repairs. Not only have these surgeons continued to successfully perform these more complex procedures, but they have also trained other local surgeons. The northern region of Ghana is now self-sufficient in performing pediatric cleft surgery.

CSI hopes to promote this type of sustainability in other parts of the world so that ultimately more children will receive the care they need and deserve.

**“Give a man a fish and  
you feed him for a day.  
Teach a man to fish and  
you feed him for a lifetime.”**

CSI strives to accomplish this,  
and encourages those we teach to do the same.



*Dr. David Tetzlaff, MD*

## CSI Welcomes New Medical Director, David Tetzlaff, MD

CSI is honored to welcome David Tetzlaff, MD as our new Medical Director. Dave is a Board Certified Hospitalist in Internal Medicine and Pediatrics and has been involved with CSI more than 8 years. He has served as lead physician on numerous site visits and medical missions, and his energy, knowledge, and people skills make him a favorite with CSI volunteers.

When Dave is not at the hospital or volunteering for CSI, he enjoys cooking and spending time with his family.

Thanks for stepping into this role, Dave. The Board of Directors looks forward to your ongoing leadership.

## A Heartfelt **Thank You** To Our Departing Board Members

**Peter Melchert, MD**, is a well-known physician in the Twin Cities, as well as in the world of international medicine. Peter began volunteering for CSI in 2004. Since then, his broad-based areas of expertise and energy have been critical to CSI.

Peter loves people, and people love Peter! He'll make anyone feel special by just being in the same room. Pete explodes with intelligence, passion, humor, and kindness. CSI volunteers describe him as the "Energizer bunny," as he is always thinking, talking, and moving. He is the rock you go to for the best advice.

As busy as Peter gets professionally, his family and friends are his true love. His wife, Christine, and son, Josh, along with his parents, siblings, and friends are what keep him going.



*Dr. Peter Melchert, MD*

The CSI community cannot thank Peter enough for all he has done for the organization over the years. Pete is stepping down as Medical Director and from the Board of Directors, but will continue on as a consultant and friend to CSI.

**Bruce Ferrara, MD**, began volunteering for CSI in the early 1990s as a member of the original Board of Directors. As his term comes to a close, he shared some thoughts with us.

"After more than 25 international missions, I appreciate the privilege to participate in the care of many wonderful children and families, and I am thankful for the experience to contribute as a mission pediatrician. I have met terrific people, such as my CSI teammates, the best people God ever created, and have made friends around the world." Bruce has been a role model and hero to many, and we thank him for the many years of service.

"There is nothing I have done in my professional life that has been more rewarding," says Bruce. "The long hours, occasional sleepless nights, stark hotels, long bus rides, and dirty scrubs have been well worth it considering the appreciation of the families and children we help. I want to thank the board members, volunteers, and donors who have created the opportunities for people like me to participate. But most of all, I am thankful to the families who have placed their faith and trust in us to care for their children. To be the recipient of that trust is a privilege. I hope to continue to support CSI's activities and participate in any way I can."



*Dr. Bruce Ferrara, MD*



## CSI Partner's Program: Mission to Quy Nhon, Vietnam

Join CSI as we travel to Vietnam in September to perform life-changing surgeries on children in need. As a CSI Partner, you will be a mission team member, serving as an essential non-medical volunteer. You will have hands-on experience in the care of the children and will be a part of changing lives, one child at a time. Your eyes will be opened to the world in a dramatic new way.



### CSI Partner Program features:

- Participation in all mission activities, including interaction with children and families, surgical observation, and assisting in care.
- Extensive pre-departure orientation and training.
- Lodging with the CSI team, including a private room and bath.
- All meals and in-country transportation.
- Partners-specific guided tours in the region.
- Round-trip coach airfare from any U.S. city

**Fee:** \$10,000 per person  
(majority is tax deductible).

**Minimum age:** 21

For further inquiries, please contact:

**Sally Lannin**, CSI Partner's Program Coordinator  
sallylannin@gmail.com

**Lora Stege Koppel, RN**, CSI Board Member  
lorakoppel@gmail.com

## Edina couple transform young lives through medical mission trips

*Originally published in the Star Tribune, January 21, 2015*

*By: John Reinan*

### **Edina couple looking forward to a fourth medical mission with Children's Surgery International.**

They're monsters. They're demons. They're outcasts.

They're babies.

About one in 1,000 children is born with a cleft lip or palate. But in some parts of the world, these babies are shunned – not only by society, but by their own blood.

"In some cultures, they're thought of as monsters or demons. Many of these kids are abandoned by their families," said Dr. Dan Sampson, an Edina resident and associate chief of surgery at Minneapolis Children's Hospital.

Sampson and his wife, Melanie McCall, have helped improve the lives of dozens of babies born with cleft lips and palates through Children's Surgery International, a Minneapolis-based nonprofit that sends volunteer medical teams to a half-dozen countries around the world.

Sampson, an oral-maxillofacial surgeon, has made an annual surgical trip to Hermosillo, Mexico, for the past three years. On each trip, McCall has accompanied him to handle logistics, medical records and photography. Hermosillo, a city of about 900,000, was chosen for the trips because it serves a large rural region yet has relatively modern medical facilities for the bone-graft procedures that Sampson specializes in.



*Melanie McCall, CSI Volunteer*

## changing lives, one child at a time.



Dr. Dan Sampson, M.D., CSI Volunteer

Most of the children Sampson sees are from poor families. The Children's Surgery International medical missions may be their only chance to have their issue addressed. The medical teams typically do more than 50 surgeries on each weeklong trip. Even so, the volunteers can't see all the young patients who vie for a spot.

"It's the saddest part of the whole experience," McCall said. "Someone has to tell those families that they can't have the surgery."

Children's Surgery International was formed in 2001 as an offshoot of Operation Smile, a national medical group that specializes in cleft lip and palate surgery. The Minneapolis group wanted to expand its mission to other forms of surgery, although cleft lip and palate remains a key focus.

Last year, a Children's Surgery International trip to Liberia was canceled because of the Ebola outbreak. But the group is sending a team to Bangladesh next month and is preparing for its first-ever trip to Vietnam later this year.

Children's Surgery International, which is not affiliated with any religious group, runs on a tight budget. All participants donate their

time and pay a portion of their expenses. The group will hold its main annual fundraiser, the Passport to Smiles Gala, in April.

The rewards are great, McCall said. One teenage girl with a cleft palate was unable to speak clearly. After surgery, she spoke clearly for the first time in her life.

"You could say this is just a cosmetic surgery, but it's not," McCall said. "In many cases, it's integral to having an opportunity to be successful and have a happy life.

"It's so emotional," she said. "They're scared to death. The area is very poor, very rural. Many of them have never been in a hospital before. And when they see their child after the surgery, many of the parents just weep with joy."

For Sampson, the trips are an opportunity for the pure practice of medicine, freed of any worries about insurance, staffing or budgets.

"I can go in and do this and not worry about whether the insurance company will approve it," he said. "This is what we're trained to do; this is what we love to do. The only considerations are, is this right for the child and can we do it safely?"

Said McCall: "There's an overwhelming sense of satisfaction to being in a relationship with people I would otherwise never meet. And helping to make a family's life better, giving a child a better chance."

And, she added with a smile, "I get to see my husband work."

## 2015 Mission Calendar

- **February 17-28, 2015**  
 Rangpur, Bangladesh  
 Rangpur Community Medical College Hospital
- **September, 2015**  
 Quy Nhon, Vietnam  
 Provincial Hospital  
*\*Partner Program opportunity available!*
- **October 2-6, 2015**  
 Hermosillo, Mexico  
 CIMA Hospital



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