



## Liberian Mission January 2008 Logistics Miracles

When Lora Koppel, Clinical Coordinator of the upcoming Liberian Mission, faced the daunting task of arranging to collect, store and ship our supplies to Liberia, she turned to her friend, nurse and Liberian team member, Jan Martland, for help. Jan arranged for family member, Richard Murphy, President and CEO of Murphy Warehouse Company, to store and ship our medical supplies for the Liberian Mission.

"The way the Children's Surgery International people did this was to coordinate deliveries, and help us store all of the supplies that needed shipping. We, at the Murphy Warehouse Company, were happy to purchase and donate a special dolly to help unload the equipment in Liberia. That dolly has high flotation tires so that the containers can be maneuvered in the sand," said Murphy.

He continued, "The team which we put on the project at Murphy Warehouse Company consisted of Jean Parupsky, Director of Customer Service, and Dick Baker, Director of Operations. They coordinated the entire process and reported that the CSI team was very easy to work with." When asked if his company would donate time and talent to help with further missions, Murphy enthusiastically said, "Yes." We can't thank all of the Murphy team enough.

With the first part of the huge material moving project done, the next step was to ship it to Liberia. Lora and crew then turned to Todd Limesand, Director of Marketing at C. H. Robinson Company. They helped CSI and Lora understand customs issues and helped us prepare the proper documentation in order to send the shipment.

C. H. Robinson delivered a 20-foot long container to the Firestone ship in the Port of Baltimore. Limesand said they "enjoyed working with super nice Lora," and got their people involved in the project. The generosity of C. H. Robinson saved CSI thousands of dollars in freight charges and we want to thank Todd, Tracie Stoltenburg and Dan Beulke for their professional and personal assistance in helping us get our supplies to Liberia. All services were donated.

Limesand also wanted us to thank Joe Wegleitner, owner of CPX Company. They are an "origin drayer" (carrier) who took the 20-foot container to the Murphy Warehouse and then delivered it gratis to the railroad, where C. H. Robinson workers coordinated the delivery of supplies to the Firestone ship in Baltimore. The best news is that we have been advised that the freight is safely in Liberia with everything intact, except a few cases of water which went missing!



### *Volunteer Profile*

**LORA STEGE  
KOPPEL**

Lora Koppel has been a nurse for more than 25 years, but it took a trip to Ghana with CSI to remind her what she loved most about nursing- the patients. "I'd been in management most of my nursing career," she said. The Ghana trip "made me realize how much I loved and missed taking care of patients," and reawakened her desire to touch children's lives. "Looking into a child's eyes, or hearing a parent sing, or watching small children take care of each other . . . that's what is important."

Koppel first heard about the organization through colleagues at Minneapolis Children's Hospital. Since "traveling and working with children are two things I love doing," she says, she was immediately interested, and volunteered on two Ghana missions. Now she is an integral part of CSI and her husband, Jim and two college-aged daughters, Molly and Anna have also pitched in to help CSI. A tireless worker, she has helped run the silent auction at the past two galas, and is currently coordinating CSI's mission to Liberia in January 2008. The Liberia mission "is especially exciting because we will be helping children and families who have survived the horrors of 14 years of civil war," said Koppel. Her enthusiasm is contagious; she's already convinced several local companies to donate goods and services to the mission.

She also loves the teaching that goes along with CSI's missions. "My first impressions of Africa were overwhelming," she says. She was dismayed by the poverty and increased social pressures on those with facial deformities. As the week progressed, however, she began to see the strength of the people and the possibility of change. "I helped teach my Ghana colleagues how to do new things. Everyone at the hospital was eager to learn. By weeks end, we had created our own ways to communicate that did not involve speaking the same language, being the same color or religion, or coming from the same place." In Africa, she says, "I learned the real meaning of hope."

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# Hermosillo, Mexico Mission 2007



**The Team**

In October, 2007, Children's Surgery International returned for the third time to Hermosillo, Mexico for a four-day mission. Working with the St. Andrews Clinic and CIMA hospital, the team operated on 33 children to repair facial abnormalities. Patients came from some of the Mexico border-area's poorest families. They'd been seen by St. Andrew's outpatient clinic in Arizona, but had no access to surgery. CIMA Hospital of Hermosillo provided hospital space and operating rooms, and CSI provided the surgical manpower and expertise.

As always, the CIMA Auxiliary greeted the 24-member CSI team with great fanfare and made their stay especially meaningful. Most rewarding was the chance for the team to see cleft lip and palate patients from the previous two missions. The children's surgery scars are healed, and their smiles proclaim their joy in their new lives, free of the stigma of facial abnormality.

## Paying for the Privilege to Serve

At last April's gala, a couple of unusual items were auctioned off: two team member spots for the 2007 Hermosillo Mission. Who would pay to serve Mexico's poorest population for four days? A lot of people, it turns out. Bidding was fierce. Barb Noecker and Nancy Secker emerged from the fray with mission spots. Barb, along with her husband Randy and daughter Courtney, is a long-time supporter of CSI; she is chairing next year's gala. Nancy is the mother of Karen Hick, a pediatrician who also went on the Hermosillo mission. Below, in their words, is their impression of the trip.

### ***What motivated you to bid for a spot on the mission?***

**BN:** My husband and I have always wanted other children in the world to have the same quality of care that Courtney did, no matter where they live or what their financial circumstances are [*Barb's daughter Courtney had a serious illness that is now resolved*]. So when I saw the spot, I wanted to bid for it . . . the chance was too great to pass up.

**NS:** Actually, my daughter [pediatrician Karen Hick] bid for me, and gave me the spot as a Mother's Day gift. She didn't even ask me! But she knows the kind of mother and

grandmother I am, and that I adore children. As a child-life specialist, I am trained to deal with them.

### **What was your role once you were there?**

**BN:** I helped with medical records, taking pictures to complete the children's files so they could be screened. I also helped entertain children in the family waiting room before their surgeries. My very limited Spanish was helpful in trying to talk to parents!

**NS:** I saw my usefulness in helping children and their families relax while they waited for surgery. I have degrees in both early childhood education and educational psychology, so I felt prepared. I brought lots of interactive toys and loved working with the children. The only problem was that I'd broken my arm three weeks beforehand while on a sailboat! But I was determined to go, anyway—and it worked out fine.

### **How were you treated by the local hosts?**

**BN:** Our hosts were amazing. They put so much time and effort into planning every detail to make sure the visit ran smoothly. They are a wonderful, generous group of people. Even at the airport, airline employees thanked team members for coming to Hermosillo to help.

**NS:** As our busload of medical people approached the hospital the first day, there was a huge crowd with people cheering . . . I've never experienced anything like it, to feel so wanted and needed!

### **Was there anything about the trip that surprised you?**

**BN:** The trust that parents put in the CSI team. It wasn't easy for them to give their child up to this group of strangers. I admired them very much. I knew they wanted only the best for their child. This surgery is life-changing for the child, family and community.

**NS:** I loved watching my daughter in her professional role, which is not something I ever get to see. It was very heartwarming to see how she and the other medical team members worked together . . . I even got to go into the operating room and watch. Everyone was so kind and made me feel so welcome.

### **Which images from the trip will stick with you?**

**BN:** The highlight for me was being in the operating room to watch Dr. Patrick Byrne perform a surgery and explain it all to me. I wasn't sure how I would react, but it was so interesting to see each cut and stitch.

**NS:** One of the mornings, I rode over in the van with a mother and her 16-month-old child who had been initially cleared for surgery. With my limited Spanish, I struck up a conversation with her. Later on, it was determined that her child couldn't undergo surgery because of a possible allergy to the anesthesia. The mother was devastated, of course, even though the doctors explained to her that her child might outgrow this allergy and have surgery at a later date. When she saw me after learning this, the mother threw her arms around me and cried and cried. I felt that, because I'd befriended her and because of my training, I provided a real service to her by being there. It was a very touching moment, and one I'll remember forever. I was so glad I went on this trip. I got more out of it than I gave.

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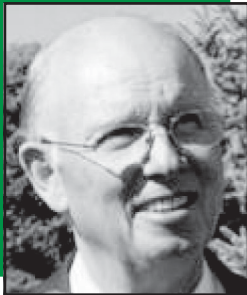
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## **Board Member Steve Hansen Retires from CSI Duties**

Long time board member and past board chairman Stephen W. Hansen, has decided to step away from active participation in Children's Surgery International (CSI). Hansen became the Board Chairman for Operation Smile, Minnesota Chapter in 1997. In 1999, he was instrumental in guiding us through an amicable separation from Operation Smile, and in 2000, helped with the formation of the Minnesota-based non-profit 501c3 Children's Surgery International. He continued as board chairman until 2005.

Steve is a retired executive vice president of Wells Fargo. His business skills and leadership were critical in helping us form our own local non-profit organization. For over ten years, Steve was influential in helping kids around the world receive life-changing operations. He will be greatly missed.

***Save the Date!***  
**Passport to Smiles Gala**  
**April 19, 2008**  
**Millenium Hotel, Minneapolis**  
**Chairperson: Barbara Noecker**

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