



Changing lives,

one child at a time.

THE SMILING COAST OF AFRICA KAREN RESCH, MD

CSI recently completed our first trip to The Gambia, the smallest country on mainland Africa. I had the privilege of providing pediatric care to our Gambian patients, working with our volunteer ENT and urology teams and local professionals at Edward Francis Small Teaching Hospital. What was most striking to me about The Gambia is the kindness and friendliness of the people, hence its nickname, The Smiling Coast of Africa.

On our first day, we completed our patient screening in an open-air structure a few miles from the hospital. The following five days we performed 39 surgeries. Most memorable is Isatou, a smiling, thriving 14-month-old with a mass between her eyes on the bridge of her nose.

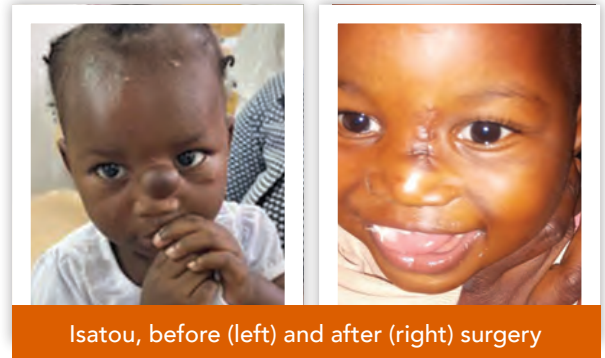
As 10% of these masses could contain brain tissue, we needed to obtain a scan to operate safely. Unfortunately, the scanner was inoperable, but we located an operable one 90 minutes away. CSI provided the funds to transport Isatou and her parents to this location and funded the scan itself. We were all relieved to learn that her tumor did not contain brain tissue and that we could

safely operate.

The surgery was successful, and as the nursing team and I provided post-operative care to Isatou, I was continually struck by her mother's constant smile. She was seeing her daughter for the first time without a distracting tumor on her daughter's precious face. This image will forever stay with me.

We are happy to hear that Isatou continues to thrive at home.

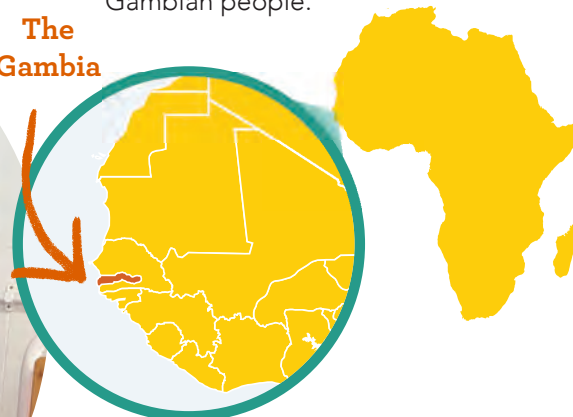
I am reminded of the story *Frederick*, by Leo Lionni, which I often read to my daughters when they were young. It's about a field mouse who gathers sunshine and warmth rather than helping his siblings gather food for the long winter. He then shares this warmth in the depth of winter when the food runs low. The smile from Isatou's mother will most certainly warm me during the winter days to come. CSI will return to The Gambia in November to provide additional life-changing surgeries. We will undoubtedly come home with more memories of warmth from The Gambian people.



Isatou, before (left) and after (right) surgery



The Gambia



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305 trip volunteers

22,800 hours of service

1,251 life-changing surgeries

20,000 children provided with deworming medication, food and school supplies

CELEBRATING 15 YEARS OF PARTNERSHIP IN LIBERIA

In January, CSI volunteers conducted another successful community outreach and surgical trip to Liberia. This year, we celebrate 15 years of partnership between CSI and Firestone Liberia. Together, we are making a profound impact in Liberia by serving children in need and strengthening the healthcare system.

This year, the advance community outreach team, led by CSI nurse Angie Olson, traveled to five schools, four orphanages, a home for seniors, and the Dojo Town Hall to deliver much-needed food, supplies and healthcare. Despite a major flight delay, the team was able to administer deworming medicine to more than 5,000 children and adults in the region.

Together with our partners at Firestone Dueside Hospital, CSI was able to provide life-changing surgical

care to 104 children in just four short days. Additionally, biomedical engineer John Norberg spent the week troubleshooting and repairing critical medical equipment to ensure surgeries went smoothly. He also continued his work teaching the local biomedical technicians how to diagnose and fix previously broken equipment. Last year, John saw a

need for improved equipment for his local colleagues, and thanks to donations from his stateside coworkers and friends, he was able to outfit the Liberian team with steel-toed boots, tools and more.



“My heart is so full in a way that I didn’t know existed. I can’t put into words the way that this experience will forever change my life.”

— JENESSA HALL, ORNURSE



2024 HIGHLIGHTS

285 
life-changing surgeries

\$250,000 
worth of medical supplies and equipment delivered to partners

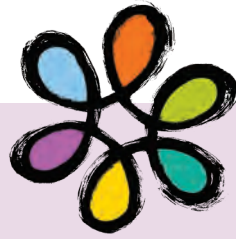
\$1.39 mil 
of total contributed services donated

5 
surgical trips

Education update: Uganda

CSI Academic Director Dr. Siva Chinnadurai and his colleagues continue to collaborate with our partners in Uganda through remote support to assist in the care and improve outcomes for Ugandan children in need of specialized treatment. CSI clinical leaders provide ongoing consultation to their Ugandan colleagues, connecting them with valuable resources, including medical and surgical case reviews, relevant literature, and radiologist interpretations of scans performed locally. This remote support allows our Ugandan partners to effectively approach more complex cases while maintaining their educational growth, even when we are not in the country.

CSI will also support their upcoming monthly grand rounds lectures with talks from CSI faculty scheduled in March, May and June.



Photos courtesy of Dr. Peter Melchert

In memoriam: Mary Alice Seipp

"I couldn't find [a photo of] her sitting and posing... she is always working!!"

– PETER MELCHERT, MD

It is with sadness that we announce the passing of Mary Alice Seipp, a global health pioneer and one of the founders of the group that is now Children's Surgery International. Mary Alice and her friend Sue Schacht read an article in an airline magazine about Operation Smile and decided to bring the work to Minnesota. With local business support, Mary Alice and Sue led the establishment of the Minnesota Chapter of Operation Smile and organized the first trip to Barinas, Venezuela, in September 1993. After dozens of trips to many global sites, in 2001 the board decided to branch out from Operation Smile to expand the scope of surgical care and focus on teaching, thus establishing Children's Surgery International. We extend our deep gratitude to Mary Alice for her leadership and service, along with heartfelt condolences to the Seipp family.

"CSI is definitely the third child of Mary Seipp and quite possibly the most favored. CSI was more than an organization to our mother, it was family, one which does amazing work under remarkable conditions."

– JENNIFER AND DANNY SEIPP, CHILDREN OF MARY ALICE

"It's because of her that I got involved – she recruited me and made me feel comfortable as a neonatologist working in the recovery room on mission trips. Not only did we work hard, we always had fun!"

– BRUCE FERRARA, MD



BOLÉ
ETHIOPIAN CUISINE



**Thursday, September 25
5 – 9 p.m.**

1341 Pascal St. N., St. Paul

A generous portion of dinner sales will be donated to CSI. Reservations and walk-ins available. Must mention CSI.

Fundraise for CSI



Together, we can bring hope, healing and lasting impact to families around the world.

With your support, we can transform even more lives in 2025. Starting a fundraiser takes just minutes and makes a world of difference. Celebrate your birthday, take on an athletic challenge like running a 5k, or mark a special occasion by raising funds for Children's Surgery International. Your efforts will not only provide life-changing surgeries and medical care for children in need but also support training for medical professionals in our partner communities, ensuring sustainable care for years to come.

Email info@childrenssurgeryintl.org if you would like any guidance or support on setting up a fundraiser.

Thank you,

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accomplish our
important work
without your
support over the
past year.

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Zinda Schaefer
 Jack and Megan Sparks
 Dr. Craig Smith
 Virginia Smith



CSI meets highest giving standards

Children's Surgery International has once again earned top ratings and outperforms most charities in financial health, accountability and transparency. We take our professional duty to our donors seriously. Through prudent investment and spending in accordance with our donors' expectations and with our mission, vision and values at the forefront, we maximize each and every dollar.



GIVE NOW



20TH ANNUAL CSI GALA

Be the light

SATURDAY, MAY 3, 2025



Omni Viking Lakes Hotel

2611 Nordic Way, Eagan, MN



It's CSI's biggest night of the year! Join us and be the light that changes a child's life and makes a lasting impact for children and communities in need.

- Support CSI's mission through silent and live auctions.
- Connect with others who care deeply about increasing access to essential and life-changing healthcare around the globe.
- Participate in fun games and activities.
- Hear about our work this year and what's in store for the year ahead.
- **RETURNING THIS YEAR: The Golden Ticket raffle** – win YOUR CHOICE of a Live Auction item! Only 100 tickets available for purchase, \$200 each. The drawing takes place before the Live Auction begins.



ADVANCE VIP CHECK-IN WITH BUBBLY FOR EVENT SPONSOR ATTENDEES.

GALA SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Sponsors are the backbone of the CSI Gala. Individuals and businesses interested in leading the success of our largest fundraiser of the year should contact Megan Sparks at megan@childrensurgeryintl.org to learn more.

Registration will be available in March. For more information, go to childrensurgeryintl.org/events.



Children's Surgery International

99 5th Avenue NW, Suite 100
New Brighton, MN 55112

Be the light

**GALA IN-KIND
DONATIONS NEEDED**



We are seeking in-kind donations for our gala's auctions and games. Your generous in-kind donations will directly support our life-changing work.

Ideal donation ideas include unused gift cards, event tickets, unique experiences, golf rounds, vacation rentals, gift baskets and more.

To contribute, please contact us at info@childrenssurgeryintl.org.



2025 TRIPS

Liberia:

January 16 – 26

Ethiopia:

February 13 – 23

Mexico:

October 3 – 8

Ethiopia:

October 16 – 26

The Gambia:

November TBD

