

CORPORATE SUPPORTERS LEND A HELPING HAND



Extending a helping hand. Photo courtesy of Sarah Rhodes.

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SOLD OUT!

The Sydney Black & White Ball is officially sold out! Thank you to all those who are supporting Interplast by attending this wonderful event!

Our combined Madang and Port Moresby program in Papua New Guinea in February this year was a great demonstration of the wonderful corporate support extended to Interplast. Literally lending a helping hand, Interplast supporter Avant funded the entire two week hand surgery trip, with Stryker, another key corporate supporter, providing a much required plating set for tailored Interplast services.

Focusing specifically on hand surgery, therapy and mentoring, six medical volunteers consulted 48 patients and operated on 23. "As an Avant employee, I think it is a wonderful opportunity for our organisation to

"The outcomes and opportunities they are providing these local communities are life-changing and you can see the gratitude on the faces of the people receiving treatment."

support the work of our members that participate in the Interplast programs and also the wonderful work that Interplast are doing across the region," explains Brett Popplewell, an Avant employee who accompanied the team to Madang as an observer.

Describing his journey as humbling, extraordinary and inspirational, Brett's "amazing experience" has touched home. "I have an overwhelming sense of respect and admiration for the work that is performed by the teams," he

said. "The outcomes and opportunities they are providing these local communities are life-changing and you can see the gratitude on the faces of the people receiving treatment."

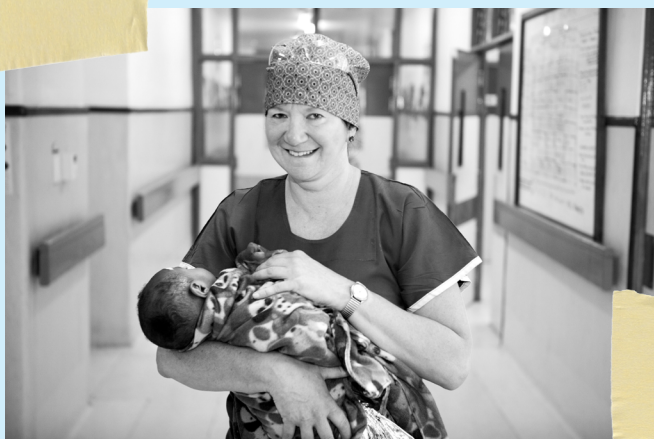
With the Papua New Guinean trip serving as the first opportunity to use the kindly donated plating set from Stryker, it is undeniable that Interplast's 'handy' associations are invaluable.

VOLUNTEER YOUR THOUGHTS...

CHRISTINE HUNTER
Volunteer Nurse

Is it the excessive number of people who are waiting to be seen in the clinic or the smiles on the faces of the families, whose children have had their cleft lip repairs, which has drawn me back to the Highlands of Papua New Guinea for my third trip? It has been said that when we operate on these children not only are *their* lives changed but that of their whole village. The family unit is very strong in the Highlands, and when a child is born with a deformity or sustains a burn from the open fires in their homes, this impacts on the quality of life for that family. Travelling to Papua New Guinea as a member of the Interplast team has provided me with some amazing experiences. Last year we travelled to Wewak, a location that had been decimated by a tsunami earlier in the year and the hospital was in a very poor state. Much of their equipment had been washed out to sea. We had to take everything including drapes and gowns as they had no sterilising facilities. We lugged 19 medical cases plus our own luggage, on four flights in one day to reach our destination - but it was all worth it. The staff were desperate to learn from our team as they hadn't had a visiting medical team for many years. I was overwhelmed by the reception we received from the staff, patients and their families.

Just last month I was lucky enough to spend two weeks in Mt Hagen. This trip proved to be the most challenging thus far. We saw 228 patients in the clinic, operated on 60 patients, predominantly cleft palates and lips and burns contractures and did numerous post-op dressings over the course of 10 days. It is such a delight to go up to the ward afterwards and see the families with their children on the road to recovery. The exhaustion at the end of the day, the feeling of isolation from your family and missing the comforts of home are all worth it when you realise the reward you feel from being part of a team of volunteers. I know the goal of our visits is to be able to treat these patients but also to leave the skills and knowledge behind so that our good work may continue.



Passionate volunteer, Christine Hunter, in Mount Hagen 2012.
Photo courtesy of Sarah Rhodes.

STAFF PROFILE

KIRSTY ROBERTSON

Sydney-based staff member
Program Activities Coordinator



HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WITH INTERPLAST?

Three and a half years.

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE WITH INTERPLAST?

I'm the Program Activities Coordinator - I coordinate the Interplast programs to Papua New Guinea and the Pacific Island countries.

MOST MEMORABLE MOMENT/S AT INTERPLAST?

After months of preparation to send a team away, seeing them arrive back at the airport, exhausted, but so inspired by what they've experienced in-country. To see their smiles, hear their stories and to see that everything went smoothly, is very gratifying.

WHAT DO YOU DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME, WHEN YOU'RE NOT SENDING MEDICAL VOLUNTEERS OVERSEAS?

I enjoy spending time in the outdoors - running, hiking, bike riding - they're all great fun!

BEST THING YOU'VE DISCOVERED ABOUT YOUR NEW CITY, SYDNEY?

Catching the ferry into the city, spending time at the beach and walking some of the beautiful trails around the harbour.

website re-development

Well, it's time for www.interplast.com.au to receive a long overdue and much required facelift! Currently being re-designed and re-developed, our sincerest of thanks are extended to First Click Consulting, for their exceptionally generous donation towards the creation of our new website. Watch this space for further exciting website updates.

FIJIAN FEEDBACK

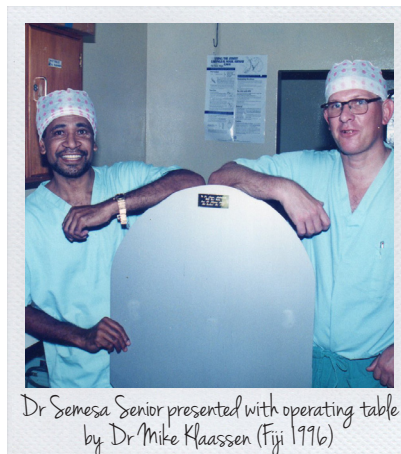
notes from afar...

"I would like to take this time on behalf of my family to sincerely thank you and your Interplast team that came to Lautoka Hospital. My son was one of the lucky ones to be operated by such highly competent, professional and friendly surgeons. He was put at ease by the soothing words of your doctors and no sign of fear or nerves was seen on my two-year-old son. He is well and healthy and very hard to refrain from jumping and running around. He does not even seem to care that his hand is in a cast. His cast will be removed next Monday and we look forward to seeing the new hands and results on his little fingers... My family was very happy and excited when Jnr was to be operated... Once again our deepest appreciation from our hearts for this life-changing operation. We cannot repay this great act of kindness. I know that all the children that were operated upon that week will never be the same again. They will grow up for the betterment of their lives and family. Vinaka Vakalevu and thank you very much from our hearts."

TALES OF A TABLE

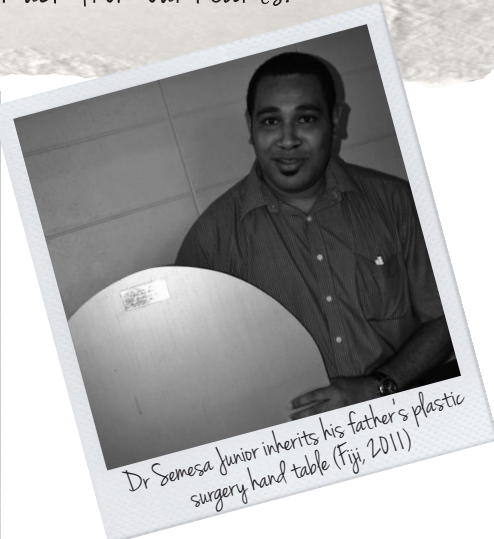
Who knew a table, of all things, would tell a tale of friendship and in-country success? A symbolic link between Interplast, a Kiwi volunteer and a Fijian surgical family, this special plastic surgery hand table has come to represent a lot more than initially expected.

The table's tale stems from a long-lasting friendship between Dr Mike Klaassen, a dedicated New Zealand-based Interplast volunteer, and Dr Semesa Matanaicake Senior, a Fijian plastic surgeon. Having trained together at Middlemore Hospital in Auckland in the late 1980s, a strong bond between the two medical registrars developed. "We operated together, studied together and laughed about the challenges that beset us," reminisces Dr Klaassen. "Later I used to get Semesa to come and work with me during Interplast missions to Lautoka." The Matanaicake's association with Interplast had begun.



Dr Semesa Senior presented with operating table by Dr Mike Klaassen (Fiji 1996)

In 1996, Dr Klaassen's father, a wrought iron tradesman who had already created a special hand surgery table for his son in 1988, crafted the second in existence specifically for Dr Semesa Senior. "He had great respect and fondness for Semesa Senior's efforts to train as a plastic surgeon – so he made him one too!" recalls Dr Klaassen. "I presented it to Semesa in an informal but very special moment in the theatres at Lautoka Hospital. Semesa Senior was very proud and the table has a small plaque from my father, dedicating the table to Semesa."



Dr Semesa Junior inherits his father's plastic surgery hand table (Fiji, 2011)

With Dr Klaassen's beloved friend, Dr Semesa Senior, unexpectedly passing away in 2010, his son, Dr Semesa Junior, an Interplast mentored trainee plastic surgeon in Fiji has inherited this special table. "Semesa was a great friend and colleague and there was an unspoken bond between us," recalls Dr Klaassen. "He was one of the most gifted surgeons I ever worked with and he really cared for his patients, for his country and his family. His son Semesa Junior will now carry the torch for his father and his country too."

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INTERPLAST IS SUPPORTED BY:



Interplast Australia & New Zealand is a project actively supported by Rotarians in Clubs and Districts throughout Australia & New Zealand



The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons established Interplast with Rotarians and the Fellows remain active supporters.



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Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons



CONGRATULATIONS!

With last year's Eureka Climb raising \$104,000 towards supporting Interplast's medical programs, we thought the gift had stopped giving. But, it's continued! Congratulations are in order for Melissa Moon, a Eureka Climb 2011 runner-up, who recently won the famed 2012 run-up New York's Empire State Building! It's Melissa's second Empire State race win. Great work, Melissa!

TALES OF A TABLE

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Proudly putting the special table to good use, along with visiting Interplast teams at Colonial War Memorial Hospital in Suva, Dr Semesa Junior's future is looking exceptionally bright. Through his association with Interplast's country coordinator and mentor, Mr Simon Thomson, Dr Semesa Junior will be, under his mentor's supervision, fulfilling an unaccredited registrars position in Tasmania in 2012.

Acknowledging the table's long history, link with Interplast's success in Fiji and bond with the Matanaicake family, Dr Klaassen admits: "There must be something significant about that table!"

volunteers...

If you have the skills to assist us with our Access patient database and you're Melbourne-based, we'd love to hear from you! Contact us on (03) 9249 1231 or interplast@surgeons.org to express your interest.

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My donation to Interplast

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Please make cheques payable to Interplast Australia & New Zealand

CREDIT CARD DETAILS (please circle):

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