



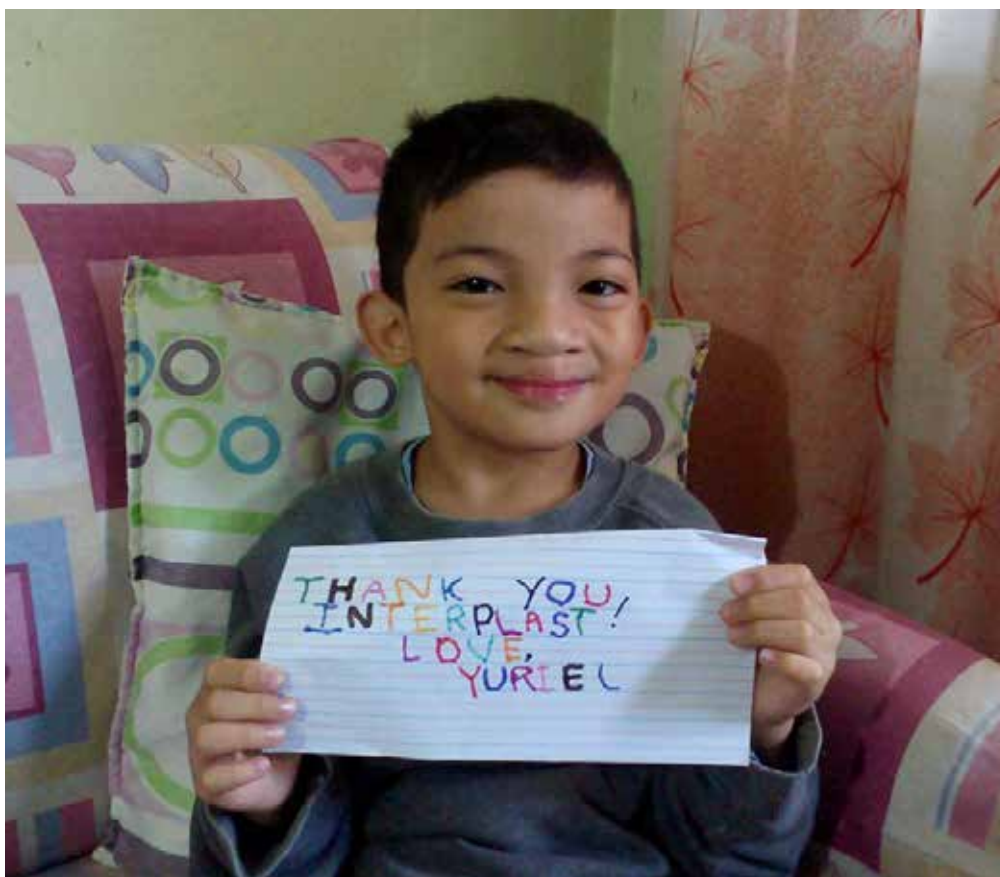
Interplast™

INSIDE INTERPLAST

REPAIRING BODIES AND REBUILDING LIVES IN THE ASIA PACIFIC REGION

EDITION 1 2016

'A SIMPLE NOTE FROM A GRATEFUL HEART'



MOTHERS FROM THE PHILIPPINES HAVE TAKEN TO SOCIAL MEDIA TO SHOW HOW INTERPLAST CHANGED THEIR CHILDREN'S FUTURES.

When you ask Interplast volunteers about the most rewarding aspect of their work, they almost always say it's the gratitude of patients and their families.

This was true for first-time volunteer nurse Philippa Tesselaar, who joined an Interplast team in Masbate in the Philippines recently

thanks to a scholarship from the Children First Foundation. The trip was made possible by funding from Filminera Resources Corporation.

In Masbate, Philippa met Junrel, aged 4, and his mother. "His mum was just so grateful for Interplast for providing the surgery he otherwise wouldn't have received; she actually got teary when she first saw him afterwards!" Philippa wrote.

"He was the sweetest little boy and loved the koala we gave him," she added.

Parents often express joy immediately after their child's procedure, but with young patients it can take a little longer for a smile to appear. Being away from home, the hospital environment and of course surgery itself can be daunting even for an adult, let alone a baby or toddler.

Thanks to social media, Interplast was able to see a former patient smiling and learn that he is enjoying a happy, healthy life years after his cleft was repaired.

Yurriel, pictured left was seven months old when Interplast visited Baguio in the Philippines in 2011. Now he is set to start pre-school in June, and practised his writing skills to create what his mother described as 'a simple note from a grateful heart'.



Yurriel's mother Del was inspired to update Interplast about his progress after seeing nurse Philippa's photo of Junrel and his mum on our Facebook page. The memory of the difference Interplast made is still fresh for Del, even though years have passed. Del explained that her son's physical and emotional state improved noticeably after the operation, and the fact that it was free meant the family avoided financial hardship.

"My worries as his mum were replaced by confidence and gratefulness – confidence for a better future for my son, and gratefulness for your passion and good heart," Del wrote.

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"You have already started a better future not only for Yuriel but also to Junrel and to all the kids who've been part of your wonderful mission.

He's excited to go to school and is really growing up as a smart, confident and happy kid. He loves to play basketball with his big brother and is fond of bedtime stories too," she wrote.

"Without you, these kids wouldn't have the smile on their faces and the smile on their future."

"I CAN'T FIND THE RIGHT WORDS TO DESCRIBE HOW YOUR MISSION MADE A CHANGE TO YURIEL'S LIFE AND TO OUR FAMILY AS A WHOLE."

More mothers took Del's lead and joined the Facebook thread to share their children's stories.

There is no better evidence of how Interplast changes futures than such an outpouring of gratitude, years after Interplast's visits. While these patients' parents are grateful to us, we are grateful to our amazing volunteers, donors and supporters, without whom we could do none of what we do.

The recent Lancet Commission on Global Surgery estimated that 99 million people in the Asia Pacific region each year miss out on surgery they desperately need. Junrel and Yuriel's stories show the power of your donations to change that, one success story at a time.

**VISIT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE
TO SHARE YOUR INTERPLAST
STORY AND SEE MORE FROM
OUR COMMUNITY**



Interplast™

SINCE 1998 INTERPLAST HAS DELIVERED:

**41 PROGRAM
ACTIVITIES**

**2,668
PATIENT CONSULTATIONS**

**4,437
LIFE-CHANGING
SURGERIES**

**IN 4 LOCATIONS IN
THE PHILIPPINES**

MANILA

**YOUR SUPPORT MAKES OUR
VITAL WORK POSSIBLE.**

**TO CHANGE A FUTURE TODAY
DONATE AT INTERPLAST.ORG.AU**

PHILIPPINES

A kitchen stool, a plank, a sheet and some surgical tape form a makeshift table, allowing two theatres to be used simultaneously for reconstructive surgery on patients' hands and arms.

ALL CARDS ON THE TABLE

Being part of a local theatre nurse's success at improvising a table extension that allowed two theatres to be used for hand surgeries simultaneously is the kind of moment that keeps Kay Suter volunteering for Interplast and coming back to Papua New Guinea.

"It was a short trip, but it was a good trip – we made progress," says Interplast volunteer nurse Kay Suter cheerily.

"The local partners we work with are just such beautiful, cheerful, helpful people. One of the things I really like about doing the Interplast trips is the contact with the theatre nurses; looking at how they've got things working, how their systems operate, and just looking if there's something I can see that could maybe be safer and better for patient outcomes," she says.

"It takes a while to get people's trust and get into a position when you can make suggestions and it's better if you go back for a follow up visit," she adds.

"I come away with little successes. For example, on several occasions both our theatres needed to have a hand table and they only had one, so we had to be creative." The available option, Kay explains, was a stool with a board attached that was too short to allow the surgeon proper access to the patient's hand from all sides.

Kay suggested asking the hospital's maintenance department if they had a longer board, but one nurse, Lydia, said she had a different idea.

"She said to me 'I'm just going out the back to have a look,' and she managed to find a

narrow board that was just the right length to serve as a hand table.

"She felt really pleased that she'd been able to come up with that, because she wasn't senior there but she'd found a solution." Kay has been to Papua New Guinea with Interplast four times. She has worked in Madang, on the northern coast twice, and Mt Hagen in the highlands once. This time, she travelled to Lae, in the east, thanks to funding from former Foreign Affairs minister Bob Carr and Interplast ambassador, Turia Pitt. On all of her trips, she was struck by the difficult conditions in which local hospital staff have to operate.

"We're used to working in air-conditioned comfort so we're used to working at a much faster pace. It's hot and humid in the Pacific, so it's safer to work more slowly," she says. Kay says that knowing she can make a difference in small ways, particularly in training and mentoring theatre nurses, is what keeps her coming back.

Visits generally last one to two weeks, and there is always more to do after the time is up, she reflects.

"Toward the end of your week you're starting to get lots of feedback and lots of questions and you know you're making progress because they're more relaxed with you." "Return visits are really nice because you can see progress," Kay adds.



Nurse Martha shows off the piece of theatre equipment that usually serves as the hospital's only hand table.

103 PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

2,668 LIFE-CHANGING SURGERIES

5,665 PATIENT CONSULTATIONS

IN 10 LOCATIONS IN PNG

Turia is taking on Papua New Guinea's notoriously difficult Kokoda Trail in May to raise awareness of our work in the challenging conditions there.

Donate to Turia or sponsor a trekker to help us provide ongoing medical training and mentoring and build capacity in PNG and 16 other countries across the Asia Pacific region.

A HAT-TRICK OF AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS

INTERPLAST BEGAN 2016 WITH EXCELLENT NEWS: THREE OF OUR SUPPORTERS WERE MADE MEMBERS OF THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA IN RECOGNITION OF THEIR OUTSTANDING CHARITY WORK.

Two long-standing Interplast volunteers, Dr Ian Carlisle and Dr Tim Cooper, and strong supporter Dr Gill Hicks were honoured for their achievements with Australia Day honours on 26th January this year.

Dr Carlisle AM joined Interplast at its inception in 1983, and has since volunteered his time and skill to change futures in Indonesia, Fiji and the Philippines.

"I was honoured to receive the award and humbled by the support of my colleagues both in Australia and Indonesia," Dr Carlisle said.

"It is satisfying to treat those with cleft palates, burns or disease who otherwise would not be helped," he told The Age newspaper.

Dr Cooper AM is based in Western Australia, and fits in volunteering between both public and private practice, and between general plastic surgery and reconstruction after trauma or cancer.

"It was both a surprise and a humbling experience to be awarded an AM. Many of my colleagues volunteer every year to work with various aid organisations such as Interplast. Many of them go unrecognised. We do this work not only to



Dr Ian Carlisle (pictured right) has been with Interplast since its inception in 1983.

help out but for the immense sense of satisfaction it leads to. We help because we can. That is in itself enough reward," Dr Cooper said.

Dr Gill Hicks AM, who survived the London bombings in 2005 and lost both of her legs, participated in the Eureka Climb, Interplast's major fundraiser and spoke at the launch event. She has frequently voiced her support for Interplast's work in the media.

Dr Hicks was awarded the Order of Australia for significant service to the promotion of peace in the community.

She was also awarded an MBE in 2005 for her charity work. Her not-for-profit organisation M.A.D for Peace works to deter people from following a path to violent action.

The three awards are evidence of the outstanding calibre of Interplast's volunteers and supporters.

WE ARE GRATEFUL TO ALL WHO WORK WITH US FOR THEIR COMMITMENT TO CHANGING THE FUTURES OF SO MANY PEOPLE IN OUR PARTNER COUNTRIES.

CONNECT WITH US



Royal Australasian College of Surgeons Building
250-290 Spring St
East Melbourne VIC 3002



03 9249 1231



contactus@interplast.org.au



www.interplast.org.au



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



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CREDIT CARD DETAILS *(please circle):*

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Name on Card: _____ Card Number: _____

Expiry Date: ____/____ Signature: _____

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FUTURES TODAY**

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