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**Speaking Notes for a PowerPoint Presentation to a Rotary Club**

*These notes have been written for a presenter, even one with minimal knowledge of Interplast, to be able to read out in conjunction with the Rotary Club PowerPoint presentation. The text is sized to enable the notes to be printed and used at a lectern/microphone.*

*The notes can be abridged or shortened at the presenter’s discretion, depending on the amount of time available to speak. As is, they will facilitate a presentation of 20-25 minutes.*

*If you would like any further information, please contact Interplast’s Coordinator – Rotary Engagement, Janette Etherington, at* *janette.etherington@interplast.org.au**, or on 0487130041.*

**Slide #1**

* Many of you will know about Interplast, but for those who are maybe new Rotarians, or don’t know about Interplast, let me give you some background.
* Interplast was co-founded in 1983 by Rotary and the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. Rotary has been a vital component of Interplast’s work since then.

**Slide #2**

* Interplast is a fantastic Rotary success story. Starting off small, being run out of a Rotarian’s lounge room, and now making a significant difference to thousands of lives in 17 countries across the Pacific and South-East Asia.

**Slide #3**

* In 1983 Dr Leo Rozner, a plastic & reconstructive surgeon, returned to Australia after having seen first-hand how the American version of Interplast was chnaging lives in South America. He was invited to visit a Rotary Club as a guest speaker, to talk about his experience. In the audience was Rotarian Dr Gerald Duff. Dr Duff was so inspired that he wanted to set up a similar program in Australia, to work in the Pacific.
* There was a desperate need then – as there is now – for plastic & reconstructive surgical interventions and allied treatment in developing nations.
* A partnership was set up with Professor Donald Marshall and the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, and Interplast was born.

**Slide #4**

* Rotary has been, and continues to be, a significant part of Interplast.

**Slide #5**

* Rotary is a 50% owner of Interplast.
* 9 PDGs sit on a Board sub-committee.
* 2 directors on the Interplast Board must be Rotarians.
* Rotary Clubs and Rotarians across Australia and New Zealand contribute nearly 20% of Interplast’s fundraising income.

**Slide #6**

* So – what does Interplast do?

**Slide #7**

* Put simply – we change lives.
* We change not only the lives of our patients and future patients, but those of their families, and their communities as well.

**Slide $8**

* We change lives in a number of ways. By providing free plastic & reconstructive surgery in developing nations where those services are not available. By providing care pre and post-operatively, including the care of our physiotherapists, speech therapists, and hand therapists.
* Interplast doesn’t just fly in and out of our partner countries to perform surgery. We have an equally strong commitment to training, so that we build capacity and systems in the countries where we work.
* This is so that the next generation of patients doesn’t have to wait for us to visit, but can also be helped by their own local clinicians. In an ideal world we would do ourselves out of a job.
* And we provide mobility assistance, in the form of prosthetic limbs, wheelchairs and crutches, for patients in the Pacific, many of whom have lost feet or lower limbs to diabetic foot disease.

**Slide #9**

* Why is there a need for Interplast still?

**Slide #10**

* Because just 6% of all surgeries every year take place in the world’s poorest countries.
* Or, to phrase it the other way around, **94%** of all surgeries take place in developed nations like Australia, New Zealand, the USA, and Britain.

**Slide #11**

* From its inception in 1983, Interplast has provided more than 27,200 surgeries, and over 13,000 training opportunities. We are so proud of what Interplast has achieved with Rotary’s help!

**Slide #12**

* Our training takes different forms. Our volunteers often forge close relationships with their in-country partners, and continue to support them remotely. We have delivered more than 16,000 hours of mentoring.
* Our webinars have been viewed more than 91,000 times! These webinars cover a wide range of topics, and have been recorded. They can be accessed free of charge by anyone, anywhere in the world.
* Word of mouth has spread to countries like Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Nauru, with some of their clinicians viewing our training resources.
* And we have recorded 111 training videos, which are also available free and on-demand.

**Slide # 13**

* This is why Interplast is such a good fit for Rotary support – together we make a difference across 2 of the 5 Avenues of Service - International Service and Vocational Service.

**Slide #14**

* This is what our training looks like. Every surgery is also a training opportunity – you can see in this photo how many local clinicians are so keen to observe the surgery, and to learn from both our surgeons and anaesthetists.

**Slide #15**

* And our training also looks like this. Training modules delivered from Australia or New Zealand to nurses in the Pacific.
* Our training videos are filmed in Melbourne – here Dr Kirstie MacGill, who is also the President of our Board, is demonstrating how to take a skin graft – using a grapefruit.

**Slide #16**

* Here Penny McMahon, one of our volunteer physios, is demonstrating how to make and fit a hand splint, as well as providing the patient with exercises which will help restore function to his hand long after the Interplast team is back home.

**Slide #17**

* Nurse Jo Oxbrow, here, is showing one of her Tongan colleagues how to anticipate the surgeon’s requests for instruments and equipment, and how to lay out the tray to maximise efficiency.

**Slide #18**

* Our surgeons, anaesthetists, nurses, and allied health clinicians are all volunteers, taking annual or unpaid leave from their jobs in Australia and New Zealand to volunteer for Interplast.
* Our nurses, like Lauren pictured here, are critical members of each surgical team, providing pre and post-surgical care, as well as in-theatre support.

**Slide #19**

* Interplast is now able to also improve the lives of people in the Pacific living with impaired mobility.
* In a number of Pacific Island nations, we provide wheelchairs, prosthetics, orthotics, and other assistive technology to people with disabilities, as well as training for in-country physios.
* In several nations there are workshops where local staff are manufacturing the mobility aids, so we are also providing employment.

**Slide #20**

* Where does Interplast work?
* Each program is based on the needs identified by medical professionals in the country.
* We only go where we are invited. We don’t duplicate the work of other service providers.

**Slide #21**

* Interplast currently partners with 17 countries across the Asia Pacific region, although unfortunately we are unable to return to Myanmar post-Covid due to the political situation there.
* Interplast’s traditional model is to send teams of fully qualified surgeons, anaesthetists, nurses, and allied health professionals – who are all volunteers - to developing nations to perform free surgeries for patients who otherwise could not access them. Our volunteers improve the quality of life of the patient – they never perform just cosmetic surgery.
* Typically, a volunteer team is away for 1-2 weeks for a surgical program and would operate on as many as 30 to 40 patients.
* Our surgeons repair congenital defects like cleft lips and palates, and release severe burns scar contractures.
* Our surgical teams also remove skin lesions and tumours, and repair traumatic injuries to upper and lower limbs, amongst other conditions.
* The focus is on restoring functionality, appearance and dignity damaged by congenital birth defects, traumatic injury, or disease.
* Our oldest patient was 89. Our youngest 28 days.

**Slide #22**

* The best way to really understand what Interplast does, is for me to introduce you to some of our patients and tell you how we changed their lives.

**Slide #23**

* This is Gladi, and she was 7 when this photo was taken.
* She and her family live in Laos, in a remote part of the country.
* As you can see, she had an exceptionally large tumour under her left arm, and across the left side of her body
* Fortunately for Gladi, the tumour was benign, and our team was able to successfully remove it
* Every time I look at this photo, I am reminded how much we all take our health system for granted. If a child in Australia developed a lump like Gladi did, she would be taken to her GP long before the lump became this large.
* If the GP couldn’t remove the lump, the child would be referred to a specialist, and if her family didn’t have private health insurance, Medicare would make sure that the lump was removed before it became a fraction of this size.
* But these services just don’t exist for families like Gladi’s in Laos

**Slide #24**

* This is Gladi and her family after her surgery, together with her Interplast surgeon and nurse
* As you can see, she can stand up straight, and hold her arm next to her body – probably for the first time in many, many months.

**Slide #25**

* This is Dafne, and she was 4 months old when an Interplast team met her in 2017. Dafne had a cleft lip.
* Clefts occur when the roof of the mouth, or the upper lip, doesn’t fuse together in-utero, which means that it is incredibly difficult for the baby to feed, because the baby can’t suck.
* Fortunately for Dafne, she was still a baby when she had her cleft surgery.
* And here she is 7 years later, with barely a scar to show that she once had a cleft lip. Photos like these are very rare at Interplast – we generally are not able to see how a patient is faring years after their surgery. In this case, in 2014, Dafne’s mum heard that an Interplast team was at the hospital, and brought Dafne in to meet everyone.

**Slide #26**

* This is Rockson, aged 5 here. He was born with a severe cleft lip and a cleft palate – a much worse situation than Dafne’s.
* Rockson lives in the remote north-west of the Solomon Islands - he had to travel for nearly three days by boat with his mother to reach the hospital in the capital, Honiara.
* Our surgeon said it was one of the worst cases of a bi-lateral cleft he had ever seen.
* In Australia or New Zealand, we would never see a child of Rockson’s age with untreated clefts – this is because a cleft lip is repaired within a few weeks of birth, and a cleft palate within a few months.
* Children with clefts not only have trouble eating and drinking, but with learning to speak. They often experience bullying at school because the other kids don’t understand why they look so different. They and their families are ostracized. They often drop out of school because of the bullying and the stigma. This in turn means that they miss out on an education, and therefore have a reduced ability to support themselves and their families as adults.
* Rockson has had 2 Interplast surgeries – the first to repair his lip and build his nose.
* The following year, his cleft palate was repaired. To do this the surgeon had to take a bone graft from one of Rockson’s ribs, to build the roof of his mouth.
* This is Rockson with his Mum the year after the second surgery.
* Almost immediately after the second surgery, Rockson’s speech had improved, and his ability to eat and drink improved progressively.
* The other children were no longer frightened of him.
* Now he has the opportunity to gain an education, and be a fully accepted member of his community.

**Slide #27**

* This is Pasilio, aged 7. He was burnt as a 4 year old when his t-shirt caught fire while he was wearing it. He sustained very severe burns to his chest, neck, upper arms, and armpits.
* You can see his parents are with him in the photo on the right.
* In developing nations, open fires are generally used for heating and cooking. There is no regular/if any electricity supply, or gas supply. It is not unusual for liquid propellants like petrol or kerosene to be used on fires.
* As we all know, open flames and children running around are a recipe for disaster.
* For children like Pasilio when they are burnt, there is often not even any first-aid knowledge in the community about how to help them. In Australia we all know to put a burns victim under cold running water, for example.
* When burns are not treated correctly, as the skin heals it hardens and shrinks, becoming almost like leather, forming contractures. And this is what you can see here, contractures pulling Pasilio’s chin down on to his chest. That is why he is looking up in both photos – he can’t raise his head to the neutral position to be able to look straight ahead.
* These severe contractures also meant that Pasilio could not properly chew his food.

**Slide #28**

* This is Pasilio after his first Interplast surgery in 2023. The range of movement of his head is 80% better than what it was before surgery.
* You can see in this photo that already he can lift his chin, which is no longer pulled down onto his chest.
* And his right arm has been freed from the contractures in his armpit which stopped him lifting his arm.
* Pasilio’s parents were overjoyed with the result. His Mum believes that he will be a surgeon one day. Having been through this experience, he will want to help other patients like him, so they don’t have to wait for an Interplast team.

**Slide #29**

* Pasilio needed a second surgery due to the extent of the contractures, so he returned to the Vaiola Hospital when Interplast visited again last year.
* This time additional contractures on his neck were released, and the contractures on his left shoulder and armpit that were preventing him raising his left arm were removed.

**Slide #30**

* On the left you can see Pasilio and his mum the day after his second surgery, with Pasilio giving the photographer a thumbs up.
* The second surgery was also quite extensive, as you can see from all the bandages.
* The photo on the right looks like it was taken the day Pasilio returned home – you can see how happy and confident he looks.
* Pasilio hadn’t been able to go to school before Interplast changed his life – now as an 8-year old he is able to go to school for the first time!
* The Interplast physiotherapist, Penny, has given Pasilio and his parents a list of exercises for him to do, so that he can strengthen his neck muscles. He also has to get used to looking straight ahead with his head in the neutral position, rather than looking up with his chin down. Penny took him for a walk, pointing out interesting things in the distance, to encourage him to look straight ahead.
* A reminder that no matter how skilled the operating and post-op clinicians are, without support from good physiotherapists and speech therapists, patient outcomes can’t be as positive as is possible.

**Slide #31**

* At the moment, all of the surgeries that you have seen described can be carried out for a cost of about $1500. Because our surgeons, anaesthetists, nurses, and allied health professionals volunteer their time, Interplast can provide these surgeries free to patients in desperate need. In Australia, these surgeries would cost tens of thousands of dollars each.

**Slide #32**

* If the Rotary Club of (Insert name) would like to help Interplast change lives, just $1,500 will provide an Interplast surgery for patients like Gladi, Dafne, Rockson or Pasilio. And of course, the training opportunity for the local clinicians to participate in.

**Slide #33**

* Thank you so much for the invitation to visit your Club today, and for your hospitality. I’m happy to take questions if anyone has any.