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OPERATION SMILE COMPLETES ITS LARGEST MEDICAL MISSION IN GUWAHATI, INDIA

International Medical Volunteers Provide New Smiles to Over 500 Patients

NORFOLK, VA – Operation Smile, a worldwide children’s medical charity, and Operation Smile India brought together a team of 166 medical volunteers from 15 countries to carry out a milestone medical mission in Guwahati, India that provided children and young adults 810 free medical evaluations and 510 facial reconstructive surgeries. During an eighteen-day period, from December 2-19, 2009, two teams of local and international volunteers, including medical professionals, students, and members of the local community, worked side-by-side to bring new smiles to the largest number of patients during a single medical mission ever conducted in India.

“I am deeply touched by the outpouring of support that has been received for this mission. It brings back memories from the first trips we took now 27 years ago,” said Dr. Bill Magee, Co-founder and CEO of Operation Smile. “After seeing the more than 500 patients that were treated by our volunteers, we can’t thank our teams enough for their efforts. For the miracles they performed over these past few days, for the friendships that have been created, and for the lives that have been changed – one smile at a time.”

Operation Smile’s work in India is representative of the organization’s global effort to bring high quality care to areas of the world that have a tremendous need for cleft lip and cleft palate treatment. Operation Smile has been working closely with the Assam government, and earlier this year entered into a public-private partnership with the state of Assam and the Tata Group to treat children with facial deformities within the region. In September 2009, Operation Smile presented the Chief Minister of Assam, Mr. Tarun Gogoi, with the distinguished Universal Smile Award in recognition of his dedication and leadership in establishing this landmark public-private partnership.

Operation Smile’s first mission to India was in 2002, and is scheduled to return to Guwahati on January 30, 2010 with the goal of transforming the lives of 1,000 patients.

To read stories from our volunteers in the field as well as view photographs from this past medical mission, visit www.operationsmile.org/guwahati.

About Operation Smile (www.operationsmile.org)

Founded in 1982, Operation Smile, headquartered in Norfolk, Virginia, is a worldwide children’s medical charity whose network of global volunteers are dedicated to helping improve the health and lives of children and young adults. Since its founding, Operation Smile has treated more than 140,000 children born with cleft lips, cleft palates and other facial deformities and the organization has a presence in over 50 countries. In addition to contributing free medical treatment, Operation Smile trains local medical professionals in its partner countries and leaves behind crucial equipment to lay the groundwork for long-term self-sufficiency.

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