



EVERY 3 MINUTES, A CHILD IS BORN WITH A CLEFT CONDITION. HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP.

A cleft condition isn't just about a smile.

It's about being able to speak clearly. It's about being able to eat and drink. It's about being free of stigma, about being welcomed into one's community.

It's about being able to live life to the fullest.

When you volunteer or fundraise for [Operation Smile](#), you are helping people around the world access the safe surgical care they need to live life to the fullest – all at no cost to the patient or their family.

What is a cleft condition?

A cleft is a gap in the lip or mouth that didn't close during the early stages of pregnancy.

What causes cleft? While some causes are still unknown, genetics and family history, pre-existing conditions, poor nutrition and exposure to harmful environmental substances can affect a baby's development.



ACCESS TO SAFE SURGICAL CARE:

YOUR LOCAL SUPPORT CAN HELP US TACKLE A GLOBAL CHALLENGE

We'll be honest, the challenge is daunting: Billions of people lack access to any surgical care. Yes, billions.

In many resource-poor environments, there is a dire shortage of surgical equipment and care providers. Our patients face financial, geographic and cultural barriers to accessing care.

In as few as 45 minutes and for as little as \$240, Operation Smile can provide safe, effective and well-timed surgical care for a person living with a cleft condition – at no cost to the patient or family.

How can you help? Operation Smile depends on your leadership, service, education and advocacy to make even more smiles possible. Compassionate students like you start a club, hold fundraisers, or raise awareness for our cause. But that's just the start!

[Start your adventure with Operation Smile Student Programs](#)

About Operation Smile:

Founded in 1982 and based in Virginia, Operation Smile is an international medical charity that has provided hundreds of thousands of free surgeries for people in developing countries who are born with cleft lip, cleft palate or other facial conditions. It is one of the oldest and largest volunteer-based organizations dedicated to improving the health and lives of children worldwide through access to surgical care. The organization has extended its reach to more than 60 countries around the world.

Operation Smile's vision:

We envision a future where health and dignity are improved through safe surgery.

Operation Smile's mission:

Through our expertise in treating cleft lip and cleft palate, we create solutions that deliver safe surgery to people where it's needed most.