



# U-VOICE

## STORYTELLERS AMPLIFY THE VOICES OF OUR PATIENTS AND VOLUNTEERS

In one of the most unique roles of a medical mission, undergraduate students serve as journalists who capture the stories of Operation Smile's patients and volunteers. These students conduct interviews, take portraits, and package it all together into feature stories that Operation Smile shares with its global network.

We are looking for dedicated Operation Smile volunteers to fill this role. Ideal candidates are self-motivated, detail-oriented and compassionate undergrads who are great listeners, culturally sensitive and love nothing more than shining the spotlight on others.

You don't have to be a journalism major or even a writer to apply for this program. In fact, this hands-on experience is sure to enhance the crucial skills – such as strong writing, editing and interpersonal skills – that you'll need no matter what you're studying to be.

[Apply online using this link](#) or at [studentprograms.operationsmile.org](http://studentprograms.operationsmile.org).

From Nicholas Nottage, U-Voice student storyteller in 2020



*"During my mission, I tracked the gloves donated by Ansell, who has been partnered with Operation Smile for four years. Experiencing the charity of organizations like Ansell, as well as health care providers and volunteers from 12 different countries, reinforced the importance of safe surgery and health care professionals working seamlessly as a team."*

[Read Nicholas's story](#)

### U-VOICE 2022 TRAINING



**When:** Training will take place via Zoom from Jan. 11-21, 2022.



**Cost:** \$100 U.S.



**How to apply:** Applications will close at 11:59 p.m. ET Dec. 6.

[Click here to apply.](#)





## FAQ

**QUESTION:** Do participants have to be journalism or communication majors?

**ANSWER:** Absolutely not! Most past U-Voicers studied medicine, law, engineering and many other subjects. The whole point of training is ensuring that each student, no matter what they study, is prepared to serve as a journalist for Operation Smile. So they don't need to want to be a professional journalist in order to serve in this special role.

**Q:** Will this require international travel at any time?

**A:** No travel is required for training, as training will be held virtually. We're continuing to monitor COVID-19 and its impact on travel conditions. Virtual opportunities to conduct interviews and capture stories will be provided. The 2022 U-Voice class is unique in that students are also

being trained to cover Operation Smile's work in their country.

**Q:** What does the U-Voice training fee cover?

**A:** When you pay to attend training, you'll receive professional instruction, a certificate that shows you completed this specialized writing program, a U-Voice T-shirt and reporter's notebook.

**Q:** Why should a student consider this opportunity?

**A:** We think this is not just a fantastic opportunity to serve Operation Smile in a unique way during a unique time, but it's also a great chance to hone your writing, editing and communication skills. Of course, these are universally critical skills that are always in demand, no matter your career path. U-Voice is a great way for students to boost their resumes with published work outside of school.



## AN OPERATION SMILE LOVE STORY

BY U-VOICER KAREN MAYET

Ana María and Pablo laughed softly when they learned their story could be recited by every Operation Smile volunteer at the Hospital Japones in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. When you hear a story like theirs, it's almost impossible to keep it to yourself.

In 2009, Ana María traveled to Santa Cruz with her mother to receive surgery for her cleft palate. Although most patients only stay a night in the post-operation ward, Ana María stayed a full week.

The day after her surgery, she met Pablo. He had traveled by himself from Cochabamba, a city 12 hours away from Santa Cruz, to receive care for his cleft palate as well.

Although his bed was not close to hers, the pair quickly became friends. Ana María had realized that Pablo came alone, and she wanted to help him eat and drink after his surgery.

After the medical mission came to an end, the two remained close – and became even more than friends. “We married seven months later,” she said with a bright smile.

Now, eight years later, Ana María watched their children play with puzzles and bubbles at the Hospital Japones. Her middle child, Vanesa, was sitting in her lap. Like her parents, Vanesa was born with a cleft lip and cleft palate. And just like her parents, Operation Smile repaired her cleft lip and cleft palate, too.