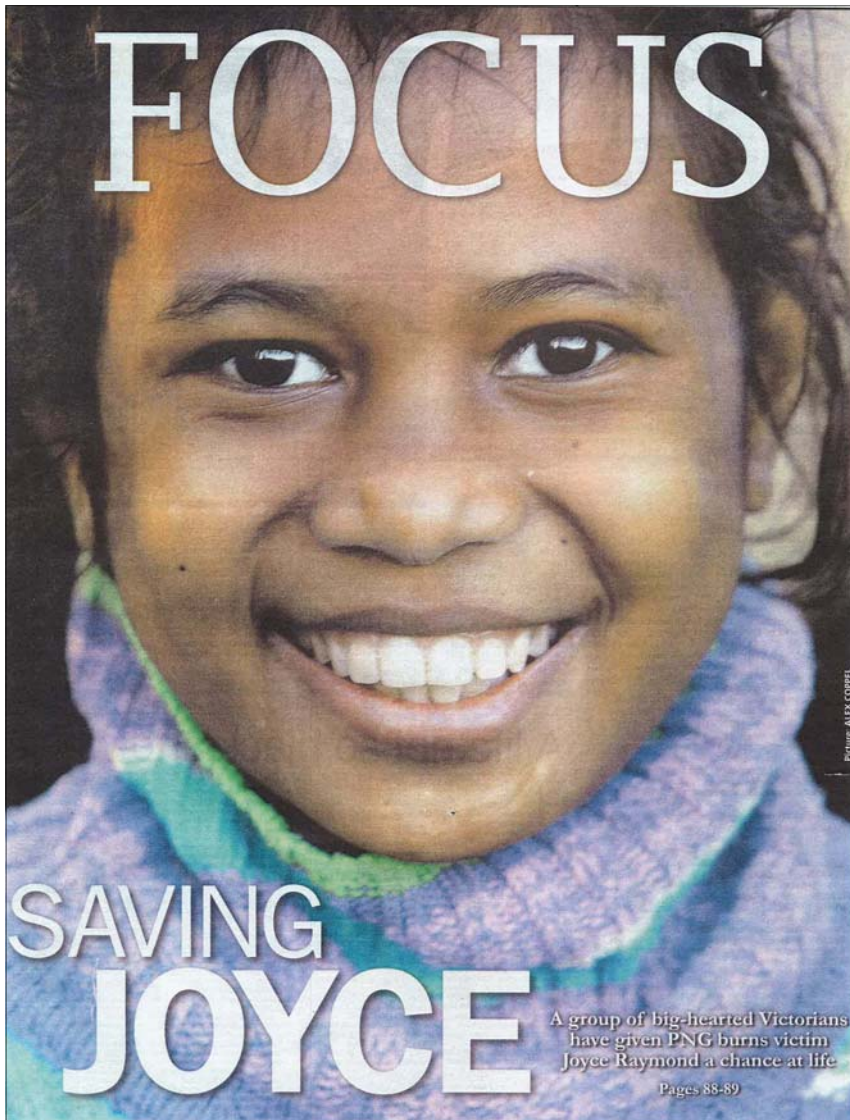




ROMAC
 Rotary
 Oceania Medical
 Aid for
 Children
 A Program of the Rotary Districts
 of Australia and New Zealand

ROMAC *reflections*

Issue # 3 - 2010



Picture: ALEX COPPEL

Above, front cover of Melbourne's Sunday Herald Sun magazine

Rotary's profile uplifted by Joyce's amazing story

Recent ROMAC patient 11 year old Joyce was the featured story in the Sunday Herald Sun with an impressive readership of over 3,000,000!

Joyce lived an idyllic life in a remote island off Papua New Guinea where there are virtually no services and the 200 or so villagers have a tough life. But they are culturally rich and enjoy their close-knit community. Joyce had a loving family and was one of six sisters.

Joyce suffered horrendous burns to 40% of her body when her grass skirt went up in flames at an open fire being used for cooking. Her mother Lucia is thought to have transported Joyce by canoe to hospital. The staff did their best to sooth Joyce's burns with regular fresh dressings and life saving medication, but the raw wounds on her back, thighs, buttocks and arms were not healing. The local Mission had basic equipment but her burns were life threatening in tropical conditions without specialist facilities.

"For the past year Joyce had to lie on her front, with dressings peeled off and sponged. She was in dreadful pain", [Continued on page 3](#)



ROMAC's new Medical Director Dr Ken (Fred) Jureidini

ROMAC is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr Ken Jureidini (aka Fred) to the important role of Medical Director. Fred leads the ROMAC Medical Panel of dedicated paediatricians and specialists and is a highly esteemed member of the ROMAC Board. The Medical Panel meets to review patient referrals and determine the patients to be treated, plus arranges the hospitals and surgeons to perform the required surgery.

Fred is Senior Physician at the Renal Unit at the Women's and Children's Hospital (WCH) at North Adelaide. He is Senior Lecturer at the Medical School and Department of Paediatrics, University of Adelaide and is External Assessor for Umanand Prasad School of Medicine in Nadi, Fiji.

Together with membership of many professional bodies, Fred is also on a number of Boards and Councils. He is a Member of the Australian Society of Hypnosis, holds a Diploma of Health & Medical Law, FRACP and MBBS Adelaide.

Fred is pictured with recent patient in Central Region, Minnat, who was referred to ROMAC due to a premature closing of the sutures (joints) in the skull called plagiocephaly. She was successfully treated by the Craniofacial Unit at the Adelaide Women's and Children's Hospital. Minnat has returned home to Dubai where her father is an Indian migrant worker, unable to afford local medical services. Fred is sporting his 'Movember' moustache, which raised substantial money for ROMAC.



Marg and Bill with Juvio Do Rosario from Timor Leste

A day in the life....

Bill Benham is Director of ROMAC's Northern Region and together with his wife Marg they make a tremendous effort for ROMAC patients. This is Bill's report on a recent patient transfer:

"Recently Marg and I had a special ROMAC Day! At 7 a.m. patient Alexandre and his mother Elisa arrived at Brisbane Airport from Wellington for transfer to Darwin en route to Dili. An airline employee was to connect with Marg, Ted Richardson of Stella Maris (who was to have their company for the day) and myself. The employee had not read his instructions and he took them to the far end of the arrival hall. He knew they were to depart Darwin for Dili at 9 p.m. and had decided to try to get them on to an earlier flight.

Once we became concerned they had not exited Customs, we set out to search for them. Marg soon found them. When we asked Elisa for her passport, she pointed to a door and the airline employee emerged. He explained his intended action.

We then left the terminal and Alexandre and Elisa went to Ted's home as planned. Soon after we heard that Virgin Blue rang our Operations Consultant Bryan Mason and asked about Alexandre's operation as they believed that the timing conflicted with the Airline's

Medical Condition Policy.

This situation cleared when it was realised that the type of operation Alexandre had was outside the time frame required. But there was a requirement for a letter from a Medical Practitioner stating that the child was fit to fly. He had already flown in from New Zealand and this problem was resolved with a copy of an email from Alexandre's Surgeon.

They were to be met later in the evening in Darwin by the District Chairman Rod Meyers who was to care for them until the charter flight left for Dili at 5 a.m. the next morning. Unfortunately Rod had a problem but arranged for Sister Odette from

the Canossan Sisters to carry out the care requirements.

Ted and his wife Marcia met us with Elisa and Alexandre at the terminal at 8 p.m. We went to the Priority Desk and received excellent treatment. Their luggage - a suitcase, overnight bag, box of milk supplement and two carry on bags - was over the limit but were accepted. Elisa was given a window seat and adjoining seats were blocked off so she had the row for herself.

As Elisa did not speak English, the staff member at the desk printed out the detail to inform the cabin crew and headed down the aerobridge to ensure they were advised accordingly. Shortly after the flight was called and Alexandre and Elisa disappeared down the aero- bridge with big smiles and waves.

This is why we spend time making sure that the money comes in to allow us to pay for these cases. It is also why Ted, Marcia Richardson and their Stella Maris group willingly give up their time to care for these children and their carers.

This is why our ROMAC Operations people put so much effort in to make sure that visas are in place, flights are booked and transit arrangements are in place.

You bet it is. Marg and I would like to thank ROMAC for providing the opportunity to be involved in making sure things happen and for the rewards that follow. We see a very sick young child transit to New Zealand and on his way back see a bright smiling child going home to a better life and a mother who cannot hide her joy.

Thank you, ROMAC.



Congratulations to Brisbane Girls Grammar School's Interact Club

Over \$2,000 was raised at a week-long fund raising event that encompassed card making, sorbet and baked goods stalls plus a raffle. Adding to the festive atmosphere the school musicians provided live lunch time entertainment for the crowds.

At the conclusion of the events, Dr John Arvier (a Maxillofacial Surgeon) presented a moving lecture about his experiences as a volunteer surgeon for ROMAC. We congratulate the Interact Club's Charlotte Beikoff, Jean Collings, Georgia Bertram and Lucy Fraser, pictured, for their inspiring effort in raising much needed funds for ROMAC's underprivileged children.

A heart warming story

Sharmaine-Anne is from the Philippines. She is five years old and had a congenital heart condition. Without an operation she could have died. The youngster was oblivious to all the fuss being made over her impressive recovery from life saving surgery by Cardiac Specialists, Drs. Gary Sholler and David Winlaw at the Children's Hospital at Westmead. At the age of one her heart was extremely enlarged, much more than the heart of a healthy child. When she played, she became ill.

But a visit back home to the Philippines by her Aunt Nene Stables, who has worked at the Children's Hospital for 17 years, changed Sharmaine-Anne's life. Knowing that Rotary helped sick children, she urged the family to apply.



Sharmaine-Anne with her mum Emmie

Her successful surgery has certainly given Sharmaine-Anne a new lease on life. Sharmaine-Anne and her mother Emmie returned to the Philippines. She was so full of beans that it was difficult to get her to stand still long enough to take her photo!

Emmie expressed her appreciation to ROMAC, "Thank you for giving Sharmaine a lifetime smile". Whilst in Sydney Sharmaine was cared for by members of the Philippine community.



Photo below, Kim before her ROMAC operation and left, with event organizer Thu Lam and, right, her mother.



Kim returns to Vietnam

Kim was born one of triplets but she had a triple cleft facial deformity.

At the age of six ROMAC brought Kim to Melbourne and Dr Tony Holmes performed her initial surgery at Royal Children's Hospital, recreating Kim's nose and bone structure.

When selecting ROMAC patients we know they will grow and will change in body size and shape. Sometimes, with patients like Kim, there needs to be time for the first surgery to heal or grow and they are then brought back for Stage Two. It is ROMAC's policy that once a patient has been accepted, it will fund a second trip should it be essential.

In Kim's case Dr Tony Holmes judged it time for the second procedure, and The Mercy Hospital in Melbourne agreed to accept Kim and provide their facilities free to ROMAC.

This has given Kim new found self esteem.

She has now returned home to join her family in Vietnam - a pretty young girl, just like her sisters.

In Melbourne there is a strong Vietnamese community and they rallied around and conducted a fund raiser late last year that raised over \$25,000 for ROMAC.

Joyce's amazing story *Continued from front page*

said Father Tony Young from the Mission. Joyce's life changed when a tour group passing through PNG heard of Joyce's situation and decided to sponsor her to come to Australia for specialized treatment. ROMAC was contacted to assist in this process.

Joyce was treated at the Monash Medical Centre, at Clayton. She was accompanied by her mother Lucia, who stayed at the Ronald McDonald House, within walking distance to Monash.

Joyce truly had some amazing guardian angels. Thanks to her sponsors, Doug and Ann Rathbone, who paid for private transport from PNG and who have had a lot of direct contact, Joyce underwent preliminary checks and was on a special diet to build her up. Her generous sponsors supplied warm clothes and even 'mod' joggers that Joyce did not want to take off!

Mrs Rathbone flew to PNG to accompany Joyce to Melbourne. We also give well deserved credit to Lorne Cole of Jet City who paid the high cost of the fuel. Two of Jet City's pilots donated their time to fly the company's Lear Jet to the Island to collect the family, together with a Specialist Nurse.

Burns Specialist Mr Chris Kimber performed the first of a series of skin grafts for Joyce. ROMAC thanks David Conn in PNG who assisted with obtaining passports and visas, Surgeon Mr Chris Kimber and the Rotarians involved in this wonderful story, John Benger, Margaret Longden, Dr Janice Peeler and Bryan Mason.

To find out more about ROMAC, here's who to contact

Whether you'd like to know more about our children, how we operate, how easy it is to be a host Rotary club, an occasional patient driver or request a club presentation, simply contact your closest ROMAC Regional Director, below, and they'll put you directly in touch with your closest District ROMAC chairperson.

ROMAC Board Chairman

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CENTRAL REGION *South Australia, Southern Northern Territory and parts of NSW (Broken Hill & Wentworth) and Victoria (The Riverland; eg: Mildura, Robinvale, Red Cliffs)*

Director PDG Dick Milner *Rotary Club of Gawler Light* Lot 4 Lyndoch Road Concordia SA 5118 merlin@tupo.com.au
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SOUTHERN REGION *Victoria and Tasmania*

Director John Benger *Rotary Club of Richmond* 78 Callaghan Ave Glen Waverley Vic 3150. (M) 0414 221 143 jbenger@bigpond.net.au

WESTERN REGION *Western Australia*

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NEW ZEALAND

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Patron-in-Chief Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia.

Australian Patron Max Walker. **New Zealand Patron** Past Rotary International President Bill Boyd.

Mission Statement "To provide medical treatment for children from developing countries in the form of life saving and/or dignity restoring surgery not accessible to them in their home country."

The objectives of ROMAC } To provide hope when there is no hope } To restore dignity to human life } To transform a child's life } To provide the best medical and surgical expertise



Is a child's life worth \$1,000?

We think so, and thanks to caring people like you ROMAC was able to arrange life changing operations on Ishraq, left, who suffered 40% burns to his legs, arms and lower body.

ROMAC became aware of Ishraq thanks to Interplast, and with help from the Rotary Club of Western Hutt, New Zealand, he was treated at Wellington's Hutt Hospital.

Thanks to ROMAC, Ishraq is now living a normal life in Fiji. Ishraq is one of our underprivileged and deserving children who need your help to enable ROMAC to continue with its life changing and life saving operations. Fortunately

ROMAC is run entirely by volunteers, community spirited hospitals reduce costs and compassionate surgeons donate their expertise. *This admirable generosity significantly increases the value of every dollar donated by caring people like you, and whilst ROMAC brings these deserving children from overseas, the money you donate stays in your country.*

Last year ROMAC treated 31 children. Unfortunately there is no shortage of potential patients, and if we only had the finances we could treat more of the 40 or so children on our waiting list. If you, your Rotary club or company donated a few dollars, \$1,000 or more, ROMAC will be able to continue this Rotary humanitarian program. Importantly, you'll have the personal satisfaction of knowing that you'll have the gratitude of children like Ishraq and their appreciative families.

Yes!

I would love to save a child's life. Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.

Reflections #3 2010

I enclose a cheque for [] \$25 [] \$50 [] \$100 [] \$500 [] \$1,000 [] \$2,500 [] \$5,000 [] Other amount \$ _____

Or debit my [] Visa [] MasterCard for a [] one-off or [] annual payment of \$ _____ that I can cancel at any time.

Card # _____ / _____ / _____ / _____ Expiry date ____ / ____

Card holder name _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Country _____ Tel _____ Email _____

Cheques payable to ROMAC. *Thank you.*

ROMAC. Rotary Oceania Medical Aid for Children Ltd

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www.romac.org.au



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