



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

Reflections



Police Academy joins forces with ROMAC

Natalina, accompanied by her sister Filomena, was a very sick girl when she came to Brisbane from East Timor to remove a large brain tumour. At 13 years old, Natalina weighed only 16 kgs.

ROMAC arranged for treatment at Brisbane's Royal Children's Hospital where she was placed under the care of Cancer Specialist, Dr Tim Hassall. Dr Martin Wood (Neurosurgeon) performed emergency surgery soon after her arrival, during which a shunt was inserted to drain fluid from her brain.

Natalina underwent lengthy chemotherapy which certainly shrunk the tumour. A further six weeks of radiation treatment followed before clearance to return to East Timor.

The Queensland Police Academy Association took a keen interest in her progress and made a substantial contribution to the teenager's medical costs.

Natalina's weight increased and she looked very healthy and happy thanks to the great contributions of the Specialists, hospital staff, ROMAC volunteers and of course the Police Academy.

The 'behind the scenes' story of saving children's lives

Surgery for a child is one of the most dramatic of life's experiences.

What if you add a foreign country; you can't speak the language; you have never seen a big city before, cars on roads, much less a multi-storey building with an elevator! That's the situation faced by many ROMAC patients and the relative that accompanies them to Australia or New Zealand.

Fortunately Rotary and ROMAC care goes well beyond just medical treatment. Having been accepted by ROMAC, a hospital and surgeon are arranged and then the logistics of

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Frances and friend having a lucky dip!

Inspiring 'INTERACTiON' for ROMAC!

It's inspiring to see and appreciate the efforts of young people in society today. The Interact Club at Southport State High School on the Gold Coast was recently featured in the Gold Coast Bulletin for its fund raising activities having held a BBQ with proceeds going to ROMAC.

Interact provides a way for students to help others whilst enjoying the social aspects of working together for worthwhile causes.

Over in East Maitland, eleven year old Frances Leary organised a backyard fete to bring a ROMAC child to the Hunter region for life-changing surgery. The fete included a jumping castle, face painting, games, a cake stall, raffle and gourmet morning tea. Frances raised just over \$4,600 - a fantastic effort backed up by the Rotary Club, neighbours and friends. Her gran is Pam Tierney, President of the Rotary Club of Maitland Sunrise. Bob Richards, ROMAC's Eastern Region Director said, "I think it is a fantastic effort and Frances is certainly an inspiration".

Rotarians saving lives

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care start. Passports, visas and transport are arranged. A ROMAC representative meets the patient at their first point of Immigration check. Then, if necessary, sees them on to their domestic flight. They are met at their arrival point by someone with a smile and the Rotary wheel on a jacket or cap.

Accommodation is arranged and can be with someone from the same ethnic community or a ROMAC supporter.

Ronald McDonald House has given great support to our patients. Some hospitals have accommodation for patients. Whilst medical treatment is the purpose of ROMAC, this is basically handled by surgeons and medical staff, but the key to ROMAC is our

dedicated carers who are constantly available to attend medical appointments and to take the patients on special outings.

The local ROMAC Region gets a club involved to ensure patients get to appointments and have appropriate food and friendship.

Food can be a big

issue and ROMAC provides them with rice, fish and chicken.

ROMAC copes with day to day disasters - like racing a young baby to Emergency at 2am and doctors being baffled as to why a small patient was turning blue. Until the doctor asked the mother, "Did you wash those blue pyjamas before you put them on her?" It was the first time the child had worn new clothes!

ROMAC copes with the situation of patients arriving with three month visas and treat-

ments scheduled for six months, which requires visa extension so that they do not become illegal immigrants. Or realising they have never been in a car before and telling us they are suffering motion sickness.

Or finding the beds unslept

in because they were not brave enough to disturb such a pristine bed set up!

A joy for ROMAC is seeing people involved for the first time and clubs realizing "This is one of the best things we have ever done".

John Benger, ROMAC Southern Region Director



Great support effort for Mario

A great contribution was made by so many to get 18 month old Mario from Timor Leste to Adelaide via Darwin for treatment for a Wilms Tumour.

Accompanied by his mother, Mario was initially assessed in Darwin, under the care of Dr Charles Kilburn and his team. His general health was improved and Mario was baptized in Darwin before flying down to the Adelaide Women's and Children's Hospital for the more intense treatment required for his condition.

A Wilms Tumour (a malignant kidney tumour) is a serious condition requiring chemotherapy. For one so young urgent treatment was necessary to shrink the tumour, with the intention of later removal.

A fond farewell to Kenneth and Numdi

A huge contribution by so many Rotary people has given Kenneth a new life. Severely burnt at 18 months at his home in the PNG highlands, when he crawled into the family cooking fire, ROMAC brought him to the Children's Hospital at Westmead. Kenneth was under the care of Dr John Harvey, head of the Burns Unit and also Dr Rob Gates (Plastic Surgeon).

The costs for Kenneth's hospitalization were kindly met by the Adrian Golding Foundation, a special fund of the Rotary Club of Sydney, in memory of a late member.

A huge contribution was made by Dunmore Lang College, a residential hall of Macquarie University, where Kenneth and his father were accommodated post-operatively, at no charge. Management, staff and students took a keen interest, and a valued effort for Kenneth was also made by their sponsors, the Rotary Club of North Ryde.



Kenneth with Ann Burleigh. Behind from the left are ROMAC Eastern Region Chairman PDG Bob Richards, Ian Conley, ROMAC District 9680 Chairman Rob Wilkinson and Kenneth's father Numdi. Ann and Ian are Rotary Club of Sydney members.

Ann and Ian are Rotary Club of Sydney members. "Everyone at Dunmore Lang can be justly proud of the contribution they have made to this little boy, and to the work of international Rotary", Rob said.

Kenneth and Numdi left with mixed emotions. They were very grateful for what had been done for them, and looking forward to reuniting with their loved ones.



Fantastic results from Rotary art show

So many dedicated Rotarians from the Rotary Clubs of Brisbane High Rise, Stones Corner and Hamilton worked together to select the art, sign up sponsors, hang the paintings, promote the event and so much more that it's no surprise their "31st Rotary Art Spectacular" at Brisbane's prestigious Riverside Building was their most successful one yet!

The substantial profits from this event were shared with ROMAC, the Heart Foundation and the three Clubs involved.

Bill Benham, ROMAC's Northern Region Director, attended the presentation ceremony at the Brisbane Polo Club. Bill said "These Clubs make a huge effort. Thirty-one shows is a big ask and ROMAC is very appreciative of their constant support".

Above Maxillo-facial Surgeon Dr John Arvier, a member of Brisbane High Rise, presenting a cheque to Bill Benham.

Receive a \$50 voucher, enjoy a drink and save a child's life!

"Next time you enjoy a quiet drink at home or share a bottle with friends, you could also be contributing towards saving a child's life!" said ROMAC's John Lawler. "Now that's something we can all celebrate!" he added. ROMAC and Cellarmasters have partnered to raise funds when you purchase from the Cellarmasters/ROMAC website.



It offers an impressive range of wines across all price points. They negotiate directly with both the 'big brand' and small boutique wineries, giving their staggering, almost 400,000 members probably the biggest online selection at the lowest online prices. The offer is not limited to Rotarians: whoever orders from the ROMAC designated page receives a \$50 voucher, so do tell your friends about this great offer. So next time you want to enjoy a drink, receive a \$50 voucher and celebrate your contribution to ROMAC's underprivileged children, please visit www.cellarmasterscommunity.com.au/romac

To find out more about ROMAC

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

- } **ROMAC Board Chairman** PDG Geoff Dainty (w) +64 9 358 3246 gdainty@vodaphone.net.nz (m) +64 9 358 3056
- } **CENTRAL REGION** South Australia, Southern Northern Territory and parts of NSW (Broken Hill & Wentworth) and Victoria (The Riverland; eg: Mildura, Robinvale etc) Director PDG Dick Milner merlin@twpo.com.au (h) 08 8523 1716
- } **EASTERN REGION** Central, Eastern and Southern New South Wales and the ACT Director PDG Bob Richards (h) 02 9525 0609 (m) 0407 894 548 richardsbob@bigpond.com
- } **NORTHERN REGION** Northern New South Wales, Queensland, Northern Territory plus Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands Director PP Bill Benham (h) 07 3348 9966 benhome@bigpond.net.au
- } **SOUTHERN REGION** Victoria and Tasmania Director John Bengner (m) 0414 221 143 jbenger@bigpond.net.au
- } **WESTERN REGION** Western Australia Director PP Joan Varian (m) 0409 594 353 joanvarian@bigpond.com
- } **NEW ZEALAND** Dr Eric Horne (w) +64 9 818 7111 (h) +64 9 818 3654 e.horne@clear.net.nz

- } **Mission** 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
- } **Objectives** } 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

- } **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



Rey before, above, and after ROMAC below



No world disaster headlines. No celebrities spruiking. No million \$ ad campaigns.

All ROMAC does is restore dignity and save underprivileged children's lives. One by one. Children like Rey, left, who for the first 13 years of his life was unable to eat or talk properly. He didn't like to go outside.

At 13 years old he was referred to ROMAC who proudly changed his life with dignity restoring treatment.

Now Rey, for the first time in his life, can eat normally, talk properly and faces the world with confidence and a smile.

ROMAC is an R.I. approved, multi-district Rotary program, run by Rotarian volunteers. Just like you.

Compassionate surgeons generously donate their time and expertise, adding amazing value to every dollar that you donate..

Even better, the money you donate stays right here in our country supporting our local communities.

Unfortunately, whilst ROMAC has no shortage of potential patients, it does have a shortage of funds.

Please help your fellow Rotarians continue their humanitarian work, and give a generous donation because deserving children like Rey and their families often can't afford to wait.

Personal donations are tax deductible. Club donations could win you a luxury holiday! (Brochures sent to clubs, download info www.romac.org.au)

On behalf of the 300 children and their families who ROMAC have already treated, *thank you.*

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

I enclose a cheque for { } \$25 { } \$50 { } \$75 { } \$100 { } \$250 { } \$500 { } \$1,000 { } \$2,500 { } Other amount \$ _____

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

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



Card holder name _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Country _____ Tel _____ Email _____

Rotary Club (if applicable) _____ Cheques payable to ROMAC. *Thank you.*

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