

SAAHIP supports Operation Smile

Colleen Whitelaw

Operation Smile is an international children's medical charity that provides free surgeries to repair cleft lip, cleft palate and other facial deformities. Cleft lip and cleft palate affects 1 in approximately every 500 – 700 newborn babies worldwide. Every 3 minutes a child is born with a cleft lip or cleft palate. In as little as 45 minutes one cleft lip surgery can change a child's life forever. The operation and follow up care costs approximately R5 500.

In 2011 the guest speaker at SAAHIP conference was Braam Malherbe. Braam described how he had run the entire length of the Great Wall of China, a distance of over 4000km. That's a marathon a day over some of the harshest terrain on earth, for 98 days. His motivation to do this was to raise funds for Operation Smile. The pharmacists were inspired and if I remember correctly it was Margaret von Zeil who challenged us all to make a donation. Every year, since 2011, we have had an Operation Smile collection at SAAHIP conference.

This year the collection was bigger than ever before. Aleta Wege went all out to encourage delegates (and colleagues, friends, family members – no one was left out) to dig deeply in their pockets. Aleta obtained marketing material, including video clips, from Operation Smile prior to conference and at each break she made sure that these clips were shown on the screen. Beaded bracelets were also sold at conference to raise funds.

We were blown away when the figures were added up at the end of conference. We had raised R49 500, enough money to pay for 9 smiles! SAAHIP's total contribution to Operation Smile from 2011 to 2017 is more than R150 000.00. This would have paid for more than 25 smiles!

On Wednesday 23 August SAAHIP Western Cape branch (as conference organizers) handed over the money to Operation Smile on behalf of SAAHIP National. Many thanks to Renier Coetzee for designing the beautiful cheque for this event.



The SAAHIP Western Cape branch hand over the cheque to Operation Smile South Africa

We would like to thank each and every person who donated to this worthwhile cause. Let's continue making a difference in a child's life.

Now, let's see what we can raise at SAAHIP Conference 2018!

Learn more about Operation Smile at southafrica.operationssmile.org