

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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***** MEDIA ADVISORY *****

**OPERATION SMILE MEDICAL MISSION TO TAKE PLACE IN SANTA CRUZ,
BOLIVIA FROM MARCH 26-APRIL 5, 2008**

*International Medical Mission Team to Provide Free Surgery to Children Born with Cleft Lips
and Cleft Palates*

NORFOLK, VA – An Operation Smile Medical Mission team will arrive in **Santa Cruz, Bolivia for an international medical mission taking place March 26-April 5, 2008** to assist children born with facial deformities. The team consists of more than 40 medical and non-medical volunteers from Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, Spain and the United States. Founded in 1982, Operation Smile is a worldwide children's medical charity dedicated to helping improve the health and lives of children and young adults.

Who: An Operation Smile International Mission Team comprised of 35-40 credentialed medical professionals from 9 countries to include:
Dr. Moises Fernandez, plastic surgeon from Bolivia
Dr. Carlos Mier, anesthesiologist from Bolivia
Dr. Glenn Merritt, pediatric anesthesiologist from Colorado
Dr. Judith Brill, pediatric anesthesiologist from California
Angela Martinelli, R.N., operating room nurse from Maryland
Cathryn Snyders, speech pathologist from Virginia

When: March 26-April 5, 2008

Where: Hospital Japones
Santa Cruz, Bolivia

This will be the eleventh Operation Smile medical mission to Bolivia, which became an Operation Smile partner country in 1999. In addition to Santa Cruz, Operation Smile has also conducted medical missions to Cochabamba. Since its 1999, Operation Smile medical volunteers have provided free physical examinations to more than 3,000 children suffering with facial deformities and more than 1,400 have received free reconstructive surgery during international medical missions.

Operation Smile volunteer Dr. Sergio Moreira Costa of Brazil will lead an education program for six Bolivian plastic surgeons that will focus on cleft lip and cleft palate treatment. During the medical mission, the Bolivian surgeons will observe surgeries and gain practical education from the

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international plastic surgeons on the mission team. In addition, Operation Smile will incorporate several discussion sessions during the week in which the Bolivian surgeons will discuss the surgeries they observed and review the specifics of the techniques performed. Operation Smile volunteers Dr. Glenn Merritt and Dr. Judith Brill from the United States will work side-by-side with five Bolivian anesthesiologists during the mission and provide additional education through lecture sessions.

The last Bolivian mission took place in November 2007 during Operation Smile's 25th Anniversary *World Journey of Smiles*, when more than 40 medical and non-medical volunteer team members from Brazil, Canada, Colombia and the United States worked with a Bolivian medical team in Santa Cruz. The medical team conducted free physical examinations for 179 children and young adults and provided surgery to 116 patients suffering with cleft lips, cleft palates and other facial deformities.

About Operation Smile (www.operationssmile.org)

Founded in 1982, Operation Smile, headquartered in Norfolk, Virginia, is a worldwide children's medical charity whose network of global volunteers are dedicated to helping improve the health and lives of children and young adults. Since its founding, Operation Smile volunteers have treated more than 115,000 children born with cleft lips, cleft palates and other facial deformities. In addition to contributing free medical treatment, Operation Smile trains local medical professionals in its 26 partner countries and leaves behind crucial equipment to lay the groundwork for long-term self-sufficiency.

Media Notes: To receive images or additional information, or to request an interview with an Operation Smile spokesperson, please contact Lisa Jones at ljones@operationssmile.org or 757-321-3252.

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