



Arnoldo - Venezuela

Born with a cleft lip to a poor family in Venezuela, Arnoldo used to hide his head so that people in his town would not stare. He suffered each day because other children made fun of his facial deformity. Every night before bed, Arnoldo prayed that a miracle would make him look like other children. That prayer was answered when an Operation Smile medical mission selected Arnoldo for life-changing surgery. When Arnoldo's father saw him in the recovery room, he said, "I feel joy, much joy." Thanks to donations, we were able to make the miracle of joy possible for Arnoldo and other children with cleft lips and cleft palates in 25 countries around the world.



Svetlana - Russia

Having been born with a cleft lip herself, Svetlana's mother knew that reconstructive surgery was the only chance her two-year-old daughter had at a normal life. But the operation was beyond the means of this single mother with 7 children. That's why she traveled 12 hours by train to an Operation Smile mission site in Novosibirsk, Russia, where she hoped Svetlana would be selected to receive a life-changing operation. In August of 2004, our medical volunteer team gave this precious little girl a beautiful new smile and a chance to grow up accepted, confident, and happy.



Thanh - Vietnam

"Harelip" is a terrible name for a child, but for the first nine years of his life, that's what Thanh was called by everyone outside of his home. Each day, the cleft lip he was born with caused him pain and humiliation. On his first day of school, the other children taunted him mercilessly because of his disfigured mouth. He refused to go back. It seemed that his whole life would be ruined by an accident of birth. Then Operation Smile came along. During our mission to Vung Tau, Vietnam, in July 2003, this boy received a new smile and reclaimed his birth name, Thanh, which means "Blue Sky." Now the sky's the limit for this child. He has returned to school, and to life, with confidence and joy.