

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 308

Commending Operation Smile.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 9, 2023
 Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 13, 2023

WHEREAS, for more than four decades, Operation Smile, a medical nonprofit service organization currently headquartered in Virginia Beach, has enhanced the health and wellness of communities around the world by providing and increasing local access to reconstructive facial surgery to repair cleft lips, cleft palates, burns, tumors, and other birth defects; and

WHEREAS, Operation Smile traces its roots to 1982, when Dr. William "Bill" P. Magee, Jr., a craniofacial surgeon, and his wife, Kathleen "Kathy" S. Magee, a clinical social worker and nurse, joined a group of medical volunteers traveling to the Philippines to provide cleft lip and cleft palate repair surgeries to children and youth; and

WHEREAS, when several patients were still in need of treatment at the end of the mission, Bill and Kathy Magee were inspired to create Operation Smile and return to complete the work they had started; between 1983 and 1985 they conducted two additional trips to the Philippines and treated an additional 400 children; and

WHEREAS, within its first few years, Operation Smile expanded its services by launching its first of many student clubs, creating the Physicians' Training Program, which still brings surgeons from around the world to the United States to learn best practices and new techniques in craniofacial surgery, and launching the World Care Program, through which patients with conditions too serious to be treated in their home countries can receive care in the United States; and

WHEREAS, in the late 1980s, Operation Smile deployed medical mission teams to Kenya, Colombia, Ghana, and Vietnam; it was the first United States-based nongovernmental organization to return to Vietnam since the Vietnam War; Operation Smile ultimately played a role in opening communications on the return of the remains of American soldiers; and

WHEREAS, Operation Smile conducted its first missions to China, Panama, Nicaragua, Russia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Brazil, Honduras, Thailand, Morocco, Bolivia, and Peru in the 1990s; the organization further expanded its operations through a fellowship program, domestic medical programs, and medical student and faculty exchange programs; and

WHEREAS, in 1999, Operation Smile launched the World Journey of Hope, a nine-week mission aboard a Lockheed L-1011 TriStar airplane converted into a flying hospital that provided 5,300 free surgeries to patients in 18 countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and South America; World Journey of Hope '99 also provided medical equipment to each mission country, allowing them to take care of more children on their own; and

WHEREAS, in the new millennium, Operation Smile completed missions to Jordan, India, Ethiopia, Paraguay, South Africa, Mexico, Egypt, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Myanmar, Guatemala, Ghana, the United Arab Emirates, and Malawi; and

WHEREAS, in 2006, Operation Smile hosted its first Global Standards of Care meeting to establish an international standard of care for all Operation Smile affiliates around the world; the following year, it commemorated its 25th anniversary by opening comprehensive care centers in four countries and initiating World Journey of Smiles that served more than 4,000 patients at 40 locations; and

WHEREAS, in 2014, Operation Smile held its first NEXT Medical Conference at its recently constructed global headquarters in Virginia Beach; they brought together medical professionals from 45 countries to discuss gaps in global surgical care and develop strategies to overcome barriers to care, enhance health infrastructure, and increase surgical capacity in their communities; and

WHEREAS, as part of its 35th anniversary campaign in 2017, Operation Smile created the United We Heal campaign to encourage global leaders to increase access to safe surgery and advocate for government engagement and the establishment of medical programs to create long-term solutions; and

WHEREAS, during the recent COVID-19 pandemic, Operation Smile redirected critical supplies and protective equipment to frontline health workers across the globe; Operation Smile continued its commitment to patients and used technology to safely provide consultations like speech therapy and psychosocial counseling; and

WHEREAS, since its establishment, Operation Smile has helped more than 346,000 children and youths in more than 60 countries worldwide receive life-changing surgical and dental care; the organization has established local affiliates in Vietnam, Australia, Italy, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Sweden, Canada, and Switzerland, among others; and

WHEREAS, Operation Smile's exceptional accomplishments have been featured in national and

international news programs and publications, and the organization has been recognized by Pope John Paul II, Mother Theresa, multiple United States presidents, and heads of state in numerous other countries; and

WHEREAS, among many accolades and humanitarian awards, Operation Smile was the inaugural recipient of the Conrad N. Hilton Humanitarian Prize in 1996 and was named the Nonprofit Organization of the Year by the Direct Marketing Association Nonprofit Federation in 2009; William and Kathleen Magee have personally received many other awards for their commitment to excellence and contributions to health and wellness worldwide; and

WHEREAS, Operation Smile maintains longstanding partnerships with the American Heart Association, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, Rotary International, and other civic and service organizations that have generously supported its mission; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Operation Smile for its exceptional service to communities around the world on the occasion of its 40th anniversary in 2022; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Dr. William P. Magee, Jr. and Kathleen S. Magee, founders of Operation Smile, as an expression of the General Assembly's appreciation for the organization's vital mission and admiration for its global achievements.