Smile Train Achieves Milestone Of 750,000 Free Cleft Surgeries

/PRNewswire/ -- "Smile Train has provided 750,000 free cleft surgeries to children around the world since its founding in 1999, and will now dedicate itself to reaching the goal of '1 million smiles' within two and half years," Smile Train Co-Founder and Chairman Charles B. Wang announced at a dinner in New York City tonight.

The dinner was held at the Russian Tea Room to thank Smile Train's donors and update them on the progress the organization has made towards achieving the mission which began 13 years ago: to give every child born with a cleft - anywhere in the world - the opportunity to live a full, happy and productive life.

Smile Train is the world's largest cleft charity, with over 2,200 partner surgeons operating in over 1,100 partner hospitals across 76 countries. It has a unique model of empowering local medical professionals to provide free, safe and quality corrective cleft surgery. This work provides a child with a second chance at life through surgery that costs as little as $250.

Smile Train took the dinner attendees through a visual journey from the very first patient - a 10-year-old girl named Wang Li from China to Jhoanna Galut, a 6-year-old girl from the Philippines who recently received the 750,000th surgical procedure. A video of Wang Li showed how much a life can be changed through this relatively simple surgery. Wang Li was recently married over Chinese New Year.

After thanking Smile Train's supporters at the dinner, Mr. Wang said, "While we are proud and delighted that Smile Train has helped hundreds of thousands of deserving children from Wang Li to Jhoanna, we don't intend to rest on our laurels. Millions of children around the world still suffer from unrepaired clefts. That is why Smile Train will re-double our efforts to give these children the medical help that will transform their lives. And that is why, with the help of current and new supporters around the world, we are determined to reach our next milestone."

The dinner expenses were covered by a generous gift to Smile Train from RR Donnelley, a global provider of integrated communications.

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