



## **Operation Smile Announces 25th Anniversary "Smile Ambassadors"**

*Roma Downey, Mark Burnett, Billy Bush, Donald Trump Jr., Vanessa Trump, Melanie Dunea and Nigel Parry support Operation Smile's efforts to bring smiles to children across the globe in "WorldJourney of Smiles", which will feature simultaneous medical missions in 25 countries with a goal of treating an estimated 5,000 children.*

Norfolk, VA ([PRWEB](#)) February 16, 2007 -- Operation Smile, a worldwide children's medical charity dedicated to helping improve the health and lives of children and young adults born with facial deformities, is pleased to announce the launch of its 25th Anniversary Smile Ambassador program. This group of notables joins Jessica Simpson, Operation Smile's International Youth Ambassador, who continues to bring awareness to the plight of these children in need. The first group of celebrities to join the program includes Roma Downey, Mark Burnett, Billy Bush, Donald Trump Jr. and wife Vanessa Trump, as well as noted photographers Nigel Parry and Melanie Dunea. As Smile Ambassadors, each celebrity will have the opportunity to visit one of Operation Smile's partner countries during the year, helping bring global attention to the needs of children born with facial deformities.

Operation Smile, founded in 1982, has medically treated more than 100,000 children and young adults around the world and in the United States. In addition to contributing free medical treatment for children born with facial deformities, Operation Smile trains local medical professionals and leaves behind necessary equipment to lay the groundwork for long-term self-sufficiency with ongoing medical care.

The Smile Ambassadors are selected based on their commitment to global philanthropy and a willingness to speak out on behalf of children. Their visibility and passion will be harnessed to bring large-scale awareness to the needs of children worldwide throughout the organization's 25th Anniversary efforts, including the November 2007 World Journey of Smiles, which will feature simultaneous medical missions in 25 countries with a goal of treating an estimated 5,000 children. World Journey of Smiles will begin with free medical screenings in each country November 8, 2007, with surgeries taking place November 12-16, 2007.

Smile Ambassadors announced today include:

Actress Roma Downey, known as angel Tess on CBS-TV's *Touched By An Angel*, who continues her role as a real-life angel by touching children's lives through her work as a Smile Ambassador, spokesperson and Board of Governors member for Operation Smile.

Mark Burnett, known for pioneering reality television, joined fiancée Roma Downey in February of 2006 in an Operation Smile medical mission in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. He continues his support as a 2007 Operation Smile Ambassador.

Billy Bush, a long-standing spokesperson and Board of Governors member for Operation Smile, is the co-anchor of NBC's *Access Hollywood*, and has served as emcee for Operation Smile's Los Angeles Gala in 2005 and 2006, which raised more than \$3 million and was attended by more than 500 Operation Smile supporters including celebrities, businesspeople and politicians. Additionally Bush co-hosted Operation Smile's *The Smile Collection* in New York alongside IMG supermodel Mini Anden in 2005, and actress Molly Sims in 2006.

Donald Trump Jr. and wife Vanessa, honored with the Wallis Annenberg Public Service Award at the Operation



Smile Los Angeles Gala in 2006, also join the Smile Ambassador team. Vanessa Trump, actress and Wilhelmina model, has been working to bring national awareness to the children of Operation Smile for over four years. Donald Trump Jr. is Executive Vice President of Development & Acquisitions for The Trump Organization and is a regular on his father's hit show *The Apprentice*. Trump Jr. was a founding member of the Operation Smile Executive Committee in Manhattan and has been actively involved in helping with event strategy and development since 2002.

Photographer Melanie Dunea specializes in portraits of the world's most influential people in the public eye, often appearing in *Vanity Fair*, *Newsweek*, *The London Times*, *People* and *New York Magazine*. Her first published book, *Precious*, received top awards in the photography field.

Photographer Nigel Parry has taken award-winning images of famed cultural and political figures that have appeared in *W*, *Vanity Fair*, *GQ*, *Newsweek* and the *New York Times Magazine*. His work has been exhibited internationally and his books have received worldwide acclaim. Together with Melanie Dunea, they have supported the work of Operation Smile for five years and are completing work on a book, *The Journey of Smiles*, for Operation Smile to be published in May.

"No child should grow up with a correctable facial deformity," notes Smile Ambassador Billy Bush. "If I can help make that source of pain disappear in even one child's life, I will without hesitation. I wholeheartedly support the work Operation Smile and its Co-founders the Magees are doing to help children around the world."

The Smile Ambassadors will be instrumental in helping raise awareness of the 25th anniversary and its initiatives, to take place throughout 2007. These include:

- Global Standards of Care - Operation Smile has announced a plan to implement Global Standards of Care for all of its medical programs as a commitment to ensuring that every patient treated by Operation Smile will benefit from the same sophisticated equipment, procedures, and highly trained and credentialed medical staff, no matter where they receive care around the world.
- Comprehensive Care Centers -- Operation Smile will open Comprehensive Care Centers in Colombia, Honduras, Morocco, China, India, the Philippines, and Vietnam. Each Center will provide surgical treatment and post-operative follow-up for thousands of additional patients, especially those in remote areas. The Centers will also help train medical volunteers, strengthen local development and fundraising activities and provide ongoing administrative support for in-country activities.
- International Forums on Medical Diplomacy - As part of its ongoing effort to create a global humanitarian network to bring healing to the world's children, Operation Smile will host international forums on medical diplomacy.
- World Journey of Smiles -- The year-long anniversary celebration will culminate in November 2007, with the World Journey of Smiles, 40 simultaneous missions in 25 countries with a goal of treating an estimated 5,000 children living with facial deformities.

About Operation Smile (<http://www.operationismile.org/>)

Founded in 1982, Operation Smile, headquartered in Norfolk, Virginia, is a worldwide children's medical charity dedicated to helping improve the health and lives of children and young adults. Since its founding,



Operation Smile has treated more than 100,000 children with facial deformities and provided education and training to physicians and other healthcare professionals around the world. In addition to contributing free medical treatment for children born with facial deformities, Operation Smile trains local medical professionals in its 25 partner countries and leaves behind crucial equipment to lay the groundwork for long-term self-sufficiency. Partner countries include: Bolivia, Brazil, Cambodia, China, Colombia, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gaza Strip/West Bank, Honduras, India, Jordan, Kenya, Mexico, Morocco, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, Russia, South Africa, Thailand, Venezuela, and Vietnam. Operation Smile has been distinguished by many prestigious awards, including the first \$1 million Conrad N. Hilton Humanitarian Prize to recognize outstanding contributions made to alleviate human suffering.

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