

# A partnership with a smile!

Alexander Wehmeyer

Operation Smile is an international non-governmental organisation (NGO) and charity that provides free surgeries to children and adults who suffer from cleft lip, cleft palate and various other facial abnormalities. Every 3 minutes a baby is born with a cleft lip and cleft palate worldwide. In Africa alone, approximately one in every 1000 children are born with a cleft lip or cleft palate. A simple surgery that lasts approximately 45 minutes is all that is needed to put a smile on an affected child's face. The operation and follow-up care costs an estimated R5 500.



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On Thursday 21 February 2019, the Western Cape branch of SAAHIP handed over a cheque for R44 000 to Operation Smile on behalf of SAAHIP National. Many smiles were present as Aleta Wege handed over the cheque to Fiola Lujabe and Yasmina Follentine for the purpose of adding a further 6 smiles.

Aleta opened by saying how wonderfully the relationship between SAAHIP Western Cape branch and Operation Smile had grown over the last 3 years. She further described how life changing the cleft lip surgery was not only for children, but even for adults. Yasmina, whose background lies in NGO work with those in poverty, said it was a "privilege to witness the kindness" and how the surgery changes lives. Fiola, who focuses on empowering the youth through Operation Smile, spoke next and gave the analogy of how Operation Smile fills

the "gap" in children with cleft lip or palates' lives. She thanked SAAHIP for the donation and said that the society was putting smiles not only on children's faces, but adults too. She then ended proceedings by promising to maintain the steadfast relationship between Operation Smile and SAAHIP.

Many thanks to Lucinda Conradie for the beautiful photos of the handover at the event.

On behalf of SAAHIP, we would like to thank each and every person who donated to this meaningful cause. As Aleta says, every bit helps! Let's continue to make a positive impact in people's lives through our donations.

You can learn more about Operation Smile at <http://southafrica.operationssmile.org>



Representatives from Operation Smile, Yasmina Follentine and Fiola Lujabe, with SAAHIP WC Branch members