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Healing the Children

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Millions of children are in need of medical attention each year due to natural disasters or birth defects, but are unable to receive the care that they so desperately need. A nonprofit organization called Healing the Children was founded in 1979 to help change the lives of children who are in need all over the world. They have helped over 60,000 children by having people generously donate their time, services, and homes.

The families of the children that need medical assistance seek the help of Healing the Children. They either put a request in to the doctors of that country or go directly to Healing the Children. The organization is mailed the report and photograph of the child and if they believe that they can be of assistance then they will help, but there has to be a hospital, a surgeon, and a host family available. If all of these requirements are met, then the child comes to the United States and receives the treatments that they need.

Some of the children that are selected are treated because of functional problems, for example they are unable to bend their arm or leg. They can also be treated because they are severely burned. Burns are commonly seen on children from the Dominican Republic because they still use kerosene to heat their homes and fires are frequent.

The child that is selected lives with a host family before the surgery and until they have recovered. This can sometimes be for weeks or even months. The doctors, hospitals, and host families are not paid for their charitable services.

The Plastic Surgery Group of Montclair, NJ has donated their services to helping Healing the Children. Dr. Allen D. Rosen, M.D., F.A.C.S. and Dr. Valerie J. Ablaza, M.D., F.A.C.A. help three to four children each year. About 90 percent of the children they help are from the Dominican Republic.

Dr. Rosen first got involved with Healing the Children 12 years ago. He saw pictures of the children that were deformed and required proper medical care. "I felt compelled to help. Without us they wouldn't have help," said

Rosen. He has been a doctor for the past 20 years. At the age of 47, he has not only helped people in the community, but children in other countries. Rosen was voted as one of, "The Best Beauty Docs," by New York Magazine and awarded, "Top Docs," from New Jersey Monthly.

Dr. Ablaza, 41, first got involved with Healing the Children 7 years ago. The youngest child that she ever treated was 8-months-old for congenital constriction band syndrome. This is a surgery that has to be preformed twice because only 50 percent of the operation can be done at a time. The child is born with this syndrome, which restricts growth of the limbs and causes deformities.

"It's a nice public service that we can give back to the community. We're in it because we love the children," said Ablaza. As a second-year surgical resident, Ablaza did charity work in the Philippines where she and her team would help up to 50 people a week. "We are very pleased to work with an organization such as Healing the Children. The emotional investment put into this program is very rewarding. Healing the Children has changed the lives of many families one child at a time." Ablaza has been a doctor for the past 15 years

world.

These doctors donate their time, energy, and skills to those that are not fortunate enough to receive proper medical attention in their country. The host families let a stranger from another country come into their home where they make them feel welcomed and safe. They have a hard task to perform and deserve to be recognized and credited.