



Ecuador, 2006

In March 2006, Chris Coyne of [Coyne Foundation](#) joined the Medical Missions for Children team of physicians, surgeons, and nurses in Guayaquil, Ecuador, for a weeklong schedule of surgeries and procedures on over seventy children with cleft palettes. Medical Missions for Children, headed by brilliant surgeon, Usama Hamdan, performs treatments for victims of cleft palette throughout the world, frequently returning to such Latin nations as Ecuador, where the incidence is high, due apparently to intermarriage, but as has been suggested, possibly to toxic insecticides used in the large rose growing industry. Sadly, both parents and children are victims, as the parents understandably feel responsible for their children's affliction.

The MMFC clinics typically last a week, hosted by a local Children's Hospital and donors/sponsors. Virtually everyone on the team is a volunteer, some physicians donating several weeks a year. Their selfless service, and amazingly successful procedures, make MMFC one of the most effective NGOs in targeting support to those in need.

MMFC welcomes donors onto its teams to observe and photograph its operations—and to provide support and comfort to family members.

Chris Coyne was deeply impressed with the work of MMFC in Ecuador, and moved by the expressions of emotion and gratitude from the children and families. He recalls his personal experience in a film memoir currently posted on YouTube. Check it out at:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JBdUkPz_V_8

