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United States based non-profit Alliance for Smiles sends medical team to the Huangshi Central Hospital in the Hubei Province, Peoples Republic of China to provide free cleft lip and cleft palate surgery for poor children.

Huangshi, Hubei -- From October 27 to November 7, 2008, San Francisco based non-profit Alliance for Smiles is providing free cleft lip and palate surgery at the Huangshi Central Hospital. The team is partnering with the hospital, The China Population Welfare Foundation and the State Family Planning Commission of Hubei Province.

The Alliance for Smiles team is composed of a total of 33 volunteer doctors, nurses, dentists, translators, photographers and other non-medical personnel. On Monday October 27, they will screen over 150 potential patients who have been contacted by the State Family Planning Commission and will schedule 120 children for surgery and dental treatment.

Alliance for Smiles (AfS) is committed to working with Chinese specialists to address the problem of this birth defect. The Medical Team will be headed by their medical director, Dr. Fred Tomlimson, a reconstructive plastic surgeon from Seattle, Washington, as well as Mission Director, Barbara Fisher, former Vice President of Boulder Community Hospital in Colorado. Dr. Colin Wong of Tiburon, California, Vice President Alliance for Smiles China Relations is also accompanying the team. All of the team members donate their time and receive no payment for services rendered.

This trip is the 15th mission for Alliance for Smiles and is supported by funding from individuals interested in helping these children as well as generous contributions from several Rotary Clubs in District 6110 of Oklahoma, Arkansas, Kansas and Missouri, the Rotary Club of Mill Valley, California.

Alliance for Smiles has chosen China as the country to concentrate its current efforts because in many remote areas there are simply too many children born with the cleft anomaly and too few financial resources for treatment. In China, one in 350 children is born with a cleft lip or palate. Alliance for Smiles' holistic treatment approach involves surgery along with dental treatment and speech therapy.

Alliance for Smiles is affiliated with the Craniofacial Department of the University of California Medical/Dental School in San Francisco. Through UCSF Alliance for Smiles is committed to setting up long term treatment programs for cleft children in China. In April 2007, Alliance for Smiles dedicated its first cleft lip and palate treatment center in Jiujiang.

All surgeries will be provided free of charge.

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