



Fred Hollows Foundation supporter, Jeryl Hutchins of Tauranga

February 2011

Dear supporter

Many years ago, I started supporting The Fred Hollows Foundation NZ and, like you, always enjoy reading their letters and updates. One day, reflecting on my donations, I decided that I would like to see the work of the Foundation first hand to really understand the difference my money is making.

I approached the Foundation and was delighted that, not only did they help make my visit happen, they offered me a choice of location. I decided to go to Vila and, of course, paid all my own costs.

As I planned, I had a strong sense of duty to my fellow donors to write a full report describing how our money is being used. I also had the idea to ask all my friends to donate \$25 to restore the sight of one person each. I was thrilled by their generosity, collecting enough to restore sight to 80 people!!!

After booking into a 'humble' hotel in Vila, I met the team at the Eye Clinic. The Clinic itself was built by the Foundation with assistance from a Rotary Club in Vila. Outside, around 50-60 men and women of varying ages and some children waited quietly. I was told that many were nervous.



People who know me know that I cry at the drop of a hat. On the first day alone, I got through a full box of tissues. Even though I tried to take myself in hand and 'bear up', there were so many heart wrenching stories and the gentleness and compassion of the team was extremely moving.

For example, 12 year old Victor Massinalae had been going blind in his right eye since he was 7. His mother had been saving for years to get to Vila. Unbelievably, just one month before the trip Victor was hit in the left eye by a mango - causing instant total blindness. The doctors decided to treat both eyes as he had his whole life in front of him. It was an amazing story and moved us all.

YES! I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A DONATION

www.hollows.org.nz | 0800 227 229



The Fred Hollows Foundation NZ

Please send me (please tick)

- Details on how to become a member of The Miracle Club by making regular donations by direct debit, automatic payment or credit card.
- Details on making a gift to The Foundation in my will.
- I have already made provision for The Foundation in my will.

Donations of \$5 and over are tax deductible and will be receipted.

I would like to make a donation of:

\$100 \$75 \$50 \$25 Other \$

BY: Cheque/money order payable to the Fred Hollows Foundation NZ enclosed.

OR: Debit my credit card - please complete details below

Amex Diners Mastercard VISA

Card No.

Name on card:

Signature: Expiry: /

Telephone

Email



Also there was a tiny six year old girl. After her surgery, when her bandage was removed, she peered intensely at my face, without a smile, then reached over to touch my watch. And no, my eyes were not dry!

I have never had the privilege of being in the company of such dedicated medical staff. They didn't stay at the five star hotel across the road, they shared our 'humble' hotel and were an incredible 'family'.

I was just amazed that this team can do 30-35 surgeries a day in two tiny rooms with two tables. It is so hard for me to convey to you adequately just how busy that Clinic was. The team worked at least 12 hours a day to see everyone. They were supported by Hollows trained nurse Annie Bong who runs the clinic on a daily basis, opening at about 8am and often staying till 8 - 10pm when the last patient is attended to.

It made me feel so guilty about how easily I take my privileges for granted. When the eye chart (sellotaped to the centre of a screen) came unstuck and fell off, I was put to work to hold it up until we found a solution - which turned out to be a safety pin in my handbag. No 8 wire Hollows style!

I spent many hours talking to patients, telling them about my friends who had given money and handing out photos. One man translated the story and everyone started singing and dancing. I was told that they were singing and praying for people in NZ who had donated. Oh dear! The tears flowed again as if they would never stop!

This visit was an absolute privilege for me. I met the patients, heard their stories and then clasped hands with them as they thanked us all for our generosity. Quite, quite different from posting a donation to Auckland. Though now I have seen how my donations are used, I will certainly not stop posting my donations regularly and I sincerely hope you don't either.

On behalf of all my new friends in Vila, thank you for making a world of difference to so many people.

Jeryl Hutchins

Jeryl Hutchins
Matapihi, Tauranga

