

Seventeen N.C. Kids Get Corrective Surgery

Seventeen children will this week, starting from Tuesday, have a reason to smile brighter when they undergo corrective surgery, which has been made possible by the Smile Foundation, at the Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe Hospital in Kimberley.

The CEO of the Smile Foundation,

Kim Robertson Smith, said the foundation not only wants to change the lives of the affected children for the better but also wants to alleviate the pressure and financial burden on the shoulders of their families.

“These families are often not in a position to afford reconstructive surgery,

which comes with a hefty price tag when conducted at a private institution. Our heartfelt gratitude and admiration goes out to every one of the outstanding medical professionals at Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe Hospital, the administrators, sponsors, volunteers, colleagues and friends, who have gone above and beyond to sacrifice their time, change lives and make miracles happen,” said Robertson Smith.

One of the children who will undergo reconstructive surgery is four-year-old Leandre van Nell, who suffered burn wounds to his upper body, legs and thighs after boiling water fell on him.

Leandre’s aunt, Portia Malanya, said they are pleased with the assistance her nephew was able to get from the foundation and the hospital.

“Leandre burnt after a kettle with boiling water fell on him and his cousin. The cousin suffered minor burn injuries to her face. The incident occurred when their older cousin returned from soccer practice and decided to take a quick bath. He made some water for him to wash in the basin. He placed the kettle on the table, which was located by the end of the bed. It appears the table was kicked by the children and made the kettle topple from the table. The water landed on the children who were in the bed.

“The Smile Foundation and the hospital have been a great help to my nephew. They have given him great medical assistance and even love during this period. He never wanted to smile, but he now smiled when he saw the other children,” she said.

Another beneficiary is 10-year-old Ashton de Bruyn, who suffered extensive burn wounds to his right hand from a pot of boiling water when he was four years old. Ashton is from Victoria West and has already undergone surgery over the years following the incident.

The incident occurred while his mother was at work and he was left in the care of a nanny. He also has a tumour on his left hand.

The youngster is said to be emotionally tormented by children who bully him at school and he often feels he needs to hide his hand when he is in public.

The mother of nine-month-old Cataleya Pienaar, who was born with a bilateral cleft palate, said she is elated that her daughter will grow up not having to be exposed to being made fun of because of her condition.

“It is not easy having a child who has a medical condition, however, I am happy that my child is able to get the necessary medical help. I also would have never been able to afford the surgeries she has undergone. -dfa

