ConnectMed INTERNATIONAL

A BUSY SPRING & SUMMER !

What is the importance of being a ConnectMed (CMI) supporter? With your help, we can thoughtfully adapt and grow our services to respond to the needs of the communities we serve. The last few months have included spreading awareness about our work to Imperial Valley and with the Girl Scouts of San Diego. We have continued our support of initiatives around increasing diversity in plastic and reconstructive, as well as those improving mental health access for children with physical differences. And of course we always try to make time for fun and connections with our friends and supporters!

Take a few moments to see what we have been up to and what we have planned - made possible with your generosity!

You can support these causes at any time!

Just click the "Donate" button at ConnectMed.org

FOR A LIMITED TIME, a donation of $125 or more includes our ConnectMed-branded Vuori zip-up jacket!

September 24, 2022: ANNUAL FUNDRAISING GALA

THE CONRAD PREBYS PERFORMING ARTS CENTER LA JOLLA, CA

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT CONNECTMED.ORG ("2022 FUNDAISER" TAB)

WHAT WE HAVE BEEN DOING

Programs & Collaborations

Camp Cosmos: May Family Meet-Up

April's theme was "What's Your Story?", and it was possibly our best meet-up yet! With over 30 registrants both in person and online, we focused on getting to know each other through telling parts of our own personal stories. The participating children and parents were so open and vulnerable in communicating about their feelings and experiences. Spirits were lifted and connections were made!

Every child received an Activity Kit with the book *365 days of Wonder*, 1 or 2 books donated by the Carmel Valley Public Library, a make-your-own comic book, and our ever popular snacks!

During the parent discussion, one mom shared:

"I was so worried that my daughter would be angry or bitter about having her condition. Dr. Gosman really pushed us to try the very first Camp Cosmos and we have been to pretty much every one since. It has changed her life for the better."

Families with children on the autism spectrum have reported that our Camp Cosmos Programs are also needed by the autism community in San Diego. To determine the extent of this need, CMI has collaborated with California State University, San Marcos Business Accelerator Program for the last several months where a team of business students investigated available psychosocial resources and requirements for implementing an impactful pilot program that would address unmet local needs.

Face Equality International & Face Equality Week

Joined forces with fellow member organizations of the Face Equality International Alliance the week of May 17-24 to advocate for recognizing facial differences as an independent equality and human rights issue.

WHAT WE HAVE BEEN DOING

Programs & Collaborations

(Continued)

Future Collaborator Scholar - Dr. Landford

Dr. Wilmina Landford is the founder of **WOCPRS (Women of Color in Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery).** It was an honor to support her as a **Future Collaborator Scholar**, as she presented to prospective plastic surgery residents at The Aesthetic Meeting, alongside our own Dr. Amanda Gosman and Dr. Camille Cash.

Plastic Surgery Research, Education & Preparation Promoting Equity & Diversity (PREPPED)

In May, we proudly sponsored PREPPED at the UC San Diego Center for the Future of Surgery. This program brought together medical students from underrepresented groups from around the country with experts and mentors from diverse backgrounds. They discussed practical tips and strategies for entering the field of plastic and reconstructive surgery.

Our diversity initiatives are part of our ongoing efforts to support better patient care globally by helping to train surgical workforces from diverse communities. In the US, diversity among plastic and reconstructive surgeons does not match the diversity of patients who need care for breast reconstruction, burn care, cleft care, etc. Improving diversity in surgical teams results in improved patient outcomes and better compliance. We look forward to supporting and partnering with WOCPRS and other diversity initiatives in the future.

We also granted scholarships to our longtime collaborators, Dr. Sandra Borquez and Dr. Zayda Veragara, to present case studies at two Latin American surgical conferences in Cancun this fall. They work tirelessly with low-income patients in Mexico.

WHAT WE HAVE BEEN DOING

CMI's Reseach Arm

Research and evaluation support nearly all of CMI's programs and outreach, to ensure that what we are doing is measurable and effective. Some of our current and upcoming research includes:

- Camp Cosmos Impact Study
- Horse Camp and Therapeutic Riding Impact Study
- Assessment of Mental Health Telecounseling Validation of Quality of Life Tool for Cleft and Craniofacial Patients in Argentina (in partnership with our 2021 International Fellow from Corrientes, Argentina)
- Assessment of severe facial burns and the role of epilepsy in Zimbabwe (in partnership with our 2021 International Fellow from Harare, Zimbabwe)
- Impact of Subsidized Childcare on Surgical Trainees

Community Outreach

In April, we volunteered at the La Jolla Half Marathon to help support the La Jolla Kiwanis Club, the race organizer and our long-time supporter!

Also in April, CMI participated in the **Imperial Valley Resource Fair** - offering Camp Cosmos psychosocial outreach programs to families in Imperial Valley. We also joined the **Resource Fair at the Involved Exceptional Parents' Day**, which took place in San Diego this year. It is a unique event for parents and caregivers of children with special needs and disabilities, educators and service providers to network in a collaborative environment.

WHAT WE HAVE BEEN DOING

Community Outreach

(Continued)

Girl Scouts of San Diego - #AbilityAwareness Event

CMI partnered with the **Girl Scouts of San Diego** during May for our Smile4Kids cause, **#AbilityAwareness**. Our team led activities and discussions for nearly 100 Girl Scouts to earn their Ability and Inclusion badge. The message we sought to convey is to celebrate others' commonalities and differences, and to focus on what they CAN do, not what they cannot.

May Spring Social

Such a lovely afternoon connecting with friends and supporters in the comfortable and intimate space at **The Cove House**, where we tasted beers, courtesy of 805 Brewing, paired with scrumptious bites from The Cove House.

San Diego Padres Community Partner

Go PADRES! We were thriled to be the featured **Community Partner at the Padres v. Pirates** game on May 28 . We had so much fun meeting our fellow Padres fans, spreading the word about ConnectMed's programs, and cheering on the Padres.

Children's Craniofacial (CCA) Association Family Retreat & Educational Symposium

We were proud sponsors of this amazing conference from June 23-26 in Dallas, TX, that brought together hundreds of people and families! We hosted a "love your selfie" activity booth, led an "Act It Out" Theater Workshop full of joy & laughs, and facilitated individual and group discussions for participants. We also supported the travel of a San Diego family, the Pachecos. This was their first ever CCA Retreat, and their 16 year old son loved meeting other young people like him!

COMING UP NEXT

Check out this timeline for just *some* of what is happening over the next few months!

Sat., June 25

Sponsor of the **West Coast Plastic Surgery Mentor Mentee Day at UC San Diego**, which strengthens mentorship between plastic surgery attendings/ residents from participating institution and students of under-represented backgrounds. The event includes teaching didactic information and technical skills.

June 27-July 1

Our 2nd Annual **Camp Horsin' Around:** a week-long horse therapy camp, which builds confidence, communication, and friendships among children with physical differences & disabilities through horses and beginning riding skills

JULY

National Cleft & Craniofacial Awareness & Acceptance Month, a time to raise awareness and improve understanding of orofacial clefts and other conditions of the head and face.
Smile4Kids cause: #EducateDontHate plus sale of CMI branded beach towels!

Sat., July 30
10AM-1PM

Summer Camp Cosmos Weekend, Day 1: simultaenous online and in-person activities for families from San Diego and around the country (& Mexico!)

Sun., Juy 31
10AM-1PM

Summer Camp Cosmos Weekend, Day 2: In-person beach day at La Jolla Shores featuring LOTS of beach activities, games, pizza & treats

REGISTER TO ATTEND 1 OR BOTH DAYS OF SUMMER CAMP COSMOS AT CONNECTMED.ORG, "CAMP COSMOS" TAB!

COMING UP NEXT

Mon., August 8
6:40 PM

JOIN US AT THE BALLGAME! CMI will be the **featured Community Partner at the Padres v. Giants game**. We will be selling a block of tickets to cheer on our home team together!

August 27

Proudly attending the **Donegan Burns Seminar** for Therapeutic Horse Riding Programs at TROT in Tuscon, AZ

Sat., Sept. 10

Surgical "workday" in Tijuana! It will be wonderful to be back with our friends at Clinica CER providing a day of surgeries, orthodontic consultations, speech therapy and psychosocial outreach for patients from Tijauna and Ensenada in partnership with Mexican specialists

Sat., Sept. 24
6PM

La La Land Fundraiser at The Conrad Prebyss Performing Arts Center in La Jolla! At this *stunning* venue, enjoy hosted bar, tasting stations, games, live music and, if you choose, dancing with indie band Help The Doctor. Tickets and information at ConnectMed.org, "2022 Fundraiser" tab

October 5-8

CMI will support & speak at the **2022 AMLPHAC and LATICFA Conference** in Cancun. These organizations provide professional development opportunites for specialists from across Latin America to continue providing excellent care for their own patients with craniofacial and other physical differences.

Sat., October 29
9AM-10:30AM PST

October Camp Cosmos Family Meet-Up: another opportunity for games, activities, speaker & togetherness for medically complex kiddos and their families (Online & in-person options)

December 10 & 11

Holidays with Camp Cosmos Weekend: Saturday December 10, online & in-person options; Sunday Dec. 11, in-person at Miracle Field at San Dieguito Park

And we have several other initiatives and events pending or in the works. Please follow us on social media to stay up to date!

JOE EBNER SCHOLARSHIPS

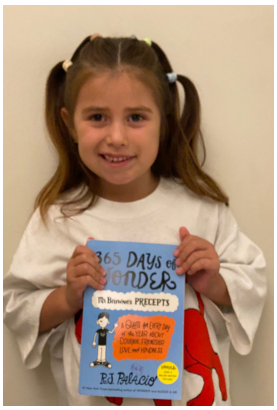
Joe was a key founder of Smile 4 Kids, our year-round awareness and fundraising campaign, because he wanted to bring more smiles to the community. Joe, age 52, passed away peacefully on March 3, 2022 with family by his side.

In his honor, CMI created the **Joe Ebner Scholarship** to help families outside of San Diego attend our Camp Cosmos programs in person. Many of Joe's friends contributed so generously to this program, which allowed us to bring these 4 AMAZING kids (plus their parent) to San Diego for our Summer Camp Cosmos Weekend this July!

SHANE (AURORA, CO)

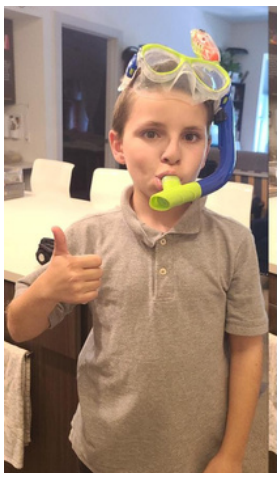
"I have a medical condition known as Crouzon Syndrome. One of the reasons I'm excited to go out to Camp Cosmos in person is so that I can meet other people just like me,...it's amazing for families to support and meet other families who also have a kid who may have a medical condition or problem."

LEA (FRAZIER PARK, CA)



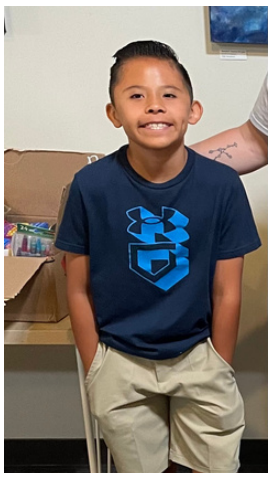
Lea has a medical condition named Microtia, and her mom said that she has never seen anyone like her in their small town. Coming to the May Meet-up and meeting a pre-med college student also with Microtia was "like a dream come true" for the whole family.

KAYDEN (MARLBOROUGH, MA)



"I have a condition called Shashi Pena and autism...This would be the first time being able to be like kids with me. It will mean a lot for me because this will give me a sense of identity. I will finally belong."

MALACHI (BLYTHE, CA)



"When I think about going to Camp Cosmos in San Diego, I think it's going to be so fun because I will get to meet new people just like me."

YOU CAN SUPPORT KIDS LIKE THESE TO JOIN FUTURE PROGRAMS BY DONATING TO THE JOE EBNER SCHOLARSHIP FUND
VISIT CONNECTMED.ORG AND CLICK "IN HONOR OF JOE EBNER" BUTTON