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Issue No. 4 October 2019



ROMAC is a project of Rotary districts in Australia and New Zealand

CREATING NETWORKS | IDENTIFYING NEED | TAKING ACTION

Chair Harold Sharp's Message

My ROMAC Friends



Welcome to my first E-Newsletter as Chairman of ROMAC.

It is a great privilege for me to take on the role of Chair of this amazing organisation. I sincerely thank Rob Wilkinson and his team for their stewardship and hard work over the past three years and look forward to working with the new team to ensure that we continue to grow as an organisation. This is critical in order for us help more young children from the Pacific region who are in need of life-saving or life-changing surgery.

I know quite a few of you have been supporters of ROMAC for many years, but you may not necessarily appreciate the number of people involved in bringing a child to Australia or New Zealand for treatment. Each person, from the medical specialists who perform the surgery, and the ROMAC team who organise all the logistical things that need to be put in place - such as arranging hospital beds, visas, flights to and from their home country and interpreters, to the Rotarians who host the mother or carer of the child during the time in hospital and throughout the recovery phase, performs a vital role and ROMAC would not be able to exist without their dedication and ongoing support. Too often, such people do not get the recognition they deserve. I was delighted to be able to personally thank two such volunteers recently and present them with Certificates of Appreciation from the ROMAC board.

It is important to realise that ROMAC has no paid staff - everyone involved in the organisation: the Board, the Operations Staff, the Doctors who perform the surgery, and the Rotarians who do the 'legwork' - volunteer their time and their talents and expertise. But, of course, there are costs involved. Whilst the surgical teams (doctors, anaesthetist, and nurses don't charge for their services, treating patients in hospitals, especially when they spend days in intensive care is an expensive exercise. There is also the expense of transport, and accommodation for the patients and their carers following their surgery. That's why we need ongoing financial support and why I ask you to consider making ROMAC your charity of choice. Simply click on the 'donate now' button below or visit our website for more options to become involved. All donations are tax deductible.

Please visit our website www.romac.org.au to read of the inspiring stories of how ROMAC has changed lives and restored dignity to so many young people from our neighbouring regions.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Harold', with a horizontal line drawn underneath it.

Harold

Viliame's Story



Viliame arrived from Fiji, bouncing into the country and sprinting about the airport on August 22nd, 2019.

Unlike many of our wee heart patients who often arrive feeling quite poorly Viliame was here for a procedure to treat a coronary arterial fistula - a connection between one or more of the coronary arteries and a cardiac chamber or great vessel. This is a rare defect and usually occurs in isolation. The majority of such fistulas are generally congenital in origin. They do not usually cause symptoms or complications in the first two decades of life, especially when small and this explained this bundle of energy on arrival. After this age, the frequency of both symptoms and complications usually increases.

Viliame, supported and cared for by his mother Talia, underwent a relatively straightforward procedure in September, at Auckland's Starship Hospital, involving a catheter closure using a variety of closure devices. Catheter technique results are mostly excellent with few complications.

Viliame is waiting for a follow up appointment at this time to review the procedure and determine if he is ready for discharge - to return home.

David Skinner and the Rotary Club of Milford have been hosts for Viliame and his mother during his stay in New Zealand.

ROMAC Volunteers Recognised



Past ROMAC District Chairs: Alan Samuels and Graeme Chester

Two volunteers were recognised for their significant contribution to ROMAC last weekend during a planning meeting held in Melbourne. Approximately 25 ROMAC Volunteers from Victoria and Tasmania attended the meeting which was an opportunity to meet the new ROMAC Chairman, Harold Sharp, and to develop some new strategies for moving the organisation forward.

In presenting Alan Samuel and Graeme Chester with Certificates of Appreciation for their dedication and commitment to ROMAC, Harold said it was a privilege to be able to personally thank such staunch supporters of our organisation, especially as this is one of the first tasks he has performed since taking on the role of Chairman.

Alan and Graeme have both volunteered for the Southern Region of ROMAC for a number of years. Alan is a Past ROMAC Chair of District 9800 and Graeme a Past Chair of ROMAC in District 9810.

Hold a Barbecue for ROMAC

The Saturday Barbecue at Bunnings has become a Rotary Institution, and has proven to be a very successful way for many clubs to raise money enabling them to carry out their humanitarian and service projects.

I'd like those clubs that hold these barbecues on a regular basis to consider devoting one such barbecue each year in support of ROMAC.

The incredible amount of community awareness and resultant funds that are raised would enable us to give life-changing treatment to many more children from our neighbouring regions.

Please contact me on chair@romac.org.au or on my mobile 0411 044 691 for more information about this.



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