



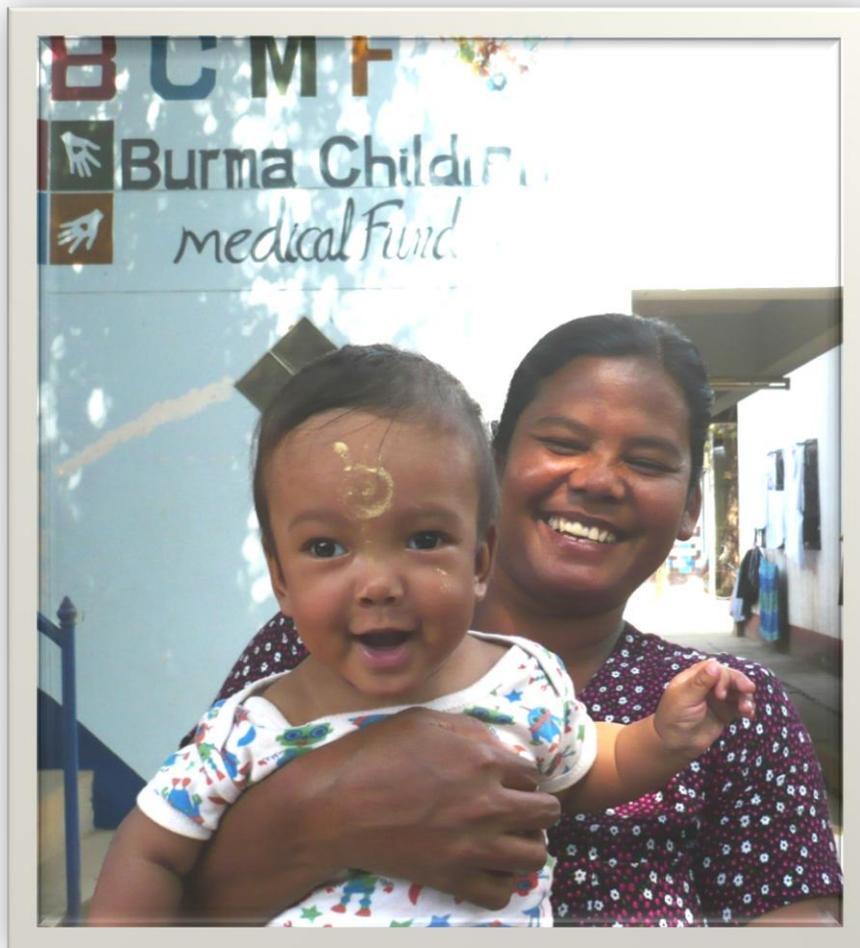
Burma Children

Medical Fund operating to give
Burma's kids a future

October – December

2015

BCMF Quarterly Report



Program Director: Kanchana Thornton

Phone: +99 898 988 694

Email: administer@burmachildren.com

Website: www.burmachildren.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/burmachildren

Twitter: www.twitter.com/burmachildren

Overview

For the Burma Children Medical Fund (BCMF), 2015 was a busy, productive and rewarding year. Our team, our partners and our supporters worked hard to help provide treatment and create smiles for our patients and their families. The last quarter of 2015 has been a much busier one than anticipated, with a flurry of activity before all but a few of our staff took a break for the holidays.

There were assumptions that patient numbers would decrease this quarter, in anticipation of Burma's first contested elections in 25 years. However, the number of patients registered in this quarter increased despite expectations.

Patient intake in this quarter was up from 66 in the third quarter of 2015, to 96. If you refer to the program statistic page (on the last page of this report), there is a significant percentage increase in plastic/reconstruction conditions (severe burns and musculoskeletal deformities) and cardiac diseases. This was due to our partnership with two medical missions in November of this quarter: one plastic surgical mission and one cardiac screening mission.

[Operation Smile Foundation, Thailand](#) provided free surgeries and medical treatment to patients with cleft lips and cleft palates, webbed fingers, extra fingers, burns and other facial deformities at Nakorn Maesot International Hospital from November 1 – 6, 2015. More than one hundred patients went to Narkorn Maesot International Hospital and two BCMF staff, along with other volunteers, helped with translations on the screening day. In a reciprocal agreement with Operation Smile, BCMF refers patients to their medical screenings, and BCMF assists those patients unable to be treated by Operation Smile to get treatment at larger hospitals in Thailand. By the end of the screening day, six patients were referred to BCMF to get further treatment.

In a joint collaboration between Lampang and Mae Sot Hospitals, echocardiograms - a diagnostic test that uses sound waves to create images of the heart, were performed for free in November 2015. A one-day screening mission screened hundreds of patients living on the Thai-Burma border with suspected heart disease. This was the second such echocardiogram mission of 2015. As a result of the screening, 16 patients with cardiac disease were referred to BCMF, thus, raising the number of cardiac patients from 12 in the last quarter to 32 in this quarter.

Another increase is the number of patients from Mandalay Division, which we did not have any in the last quarter. Patients typically do not come to BCMF from Mandalay Division because it is a 1000 kilometer journey and not many people from that region know about BCMF. Of the three, the two patients were referred by our current patients and one by our partner organization from Burma (Pinlon Hospital). By working with

our partners in Burma, more patients will learn more about the services offered by BCMF therefore extending our services across the country.

During this quarter, BCMF had the opportunity to visit Eastern Burma again where a pilot project has begun across the border, providing support to a clinic for displaced people in Karen State. Following the success of BCMF's partnership with Lah Per Her (see third quarter report 2015), BCMF established a relationship with Htee Ka Haw Clinic, also in rural Karen State. The aim of this was to implement an early-intervention program to reach patients earlier in their illness and share resources including donations and wheelchairs. BCMF made a trip to this rural clinic, travelling through tobacco fields, corn fields, across rivers and on small roads inaccessible during the rainy season. BCMF staff arrived to the newly-opened clinic in a beautiful setting in the mountains – yet its beauty is deceptive, as these areas have long been affected by conflict. Many villagers had travelled far, some people for over four hours to request help from BCMF.



In cooperation with [Wheelchairs for Kids](#), BCMF gave out four wheelchairs to children and one wheelchair to an adult at the Htee Ka Haw clinic. BCMF also performed a wheelchair-training for the local staff, so they have the knowledge to put together a wheelchair on their own in the future. At the end of

the single day visit, 14 patients who needed various types of surgeries were referred to BCMF.

A further capacity building initiative is BCMF's eye care and refraction training project in Eastern Burma. Early this quarter, BCMF organized and funded an eye care and refraction training course at the Ananda Myitta Clinic (AMC), Kabalone monastery, Hpa-an Township, Karen State, Burma. In order to expand cooperation with the Ananda Myitta Clinic, an eye training course was sponsored by BCMF. Satja Netek, an ophthalmic nurse specialist with over ten years of experience in eye care and refraction training for the International Rescue Committee (IRC), developed and delivered the course. Six participants, five from Ananda Myitta Clinic and one from Hlaing Bwe Eye Clinic, were selected to attend the intensive two-week course. All six trainees successfully completed the training course as assessed by pre- and post-training examinations. Besides written exams, practicums were routinely conducted to ensure concepts were captured with appropriate corresponding techniques. At the end of the

training, BCMF provided AMC with a refraction trial lens set, eye charts and hundreds of eye glasses in different powers. This initial capacity support will enable AMC to start their vision screening program. To make this project sustainable, AMC plans to charge



patients a nominal fee for the eye glasses, enabling the clinic to raise enough money to buy more eye glasses in the future.

With the newly trained staff, AMC can now perform the assessment and help diagnose eye patients both at the clinic in Hpa-an and at remote mobile clinic sites that they regularly attend. AMC staff can now test the patients' eyesight and give out the correct power glasses. Additionally, AMC staff members are now able to detect eye conditions early, and refer them to the appropriate care center.

Over the past ten years, Chiang Mai Citylife has hosted an annual Garden Fair to raise money for local charities. On November 21st, 2015 BCMF was one of two fortunate recipient organizations. The Citylife Garden Fair, located in Chiang Mai's JJ Hobby Market, is a community event that is fueled by its donors and volunteer support. The fair features food and drink stalls, art vendors, and businesses from across the city. Other highlights of the fair include the live musical performances and the live auctions. Chiang Mai Citylife selected BCMF as a recipient foundation, recognizing its charitable efforts with underserved populations and its ability to grow and thrive over the years. BCMF staff sold items at a booth and enlightened visitors of BCMF's operation. This year, the Citylife Garden Fair raised 120,000 baht (3,300 USD) to donate to BCMF! The donation



is highly appreciated and will go into the funding of treatment for future patients and vegetables garden project at our Chiang Mai patient house.



Further, in this quarter, BCMF conducted some activities in Chiang Mai for our patients. BCMF believes information on child's rights is crucial for our patients as well as parents and staff, since child's rights protect the child as a human being. In this quarter BCMF staff conducted a two-day Child's Rights Training at the Chiang Mai patient house for patients, caregivers and staff. Over 10 patients and caregivers participated in the activity.

As the Christmas and holiday season were approaching, patients and caregivers were excited. Although they knew they would not be able to celebrate Christmas at home with their families, they had a different kind of memorable experience, something many say they enjoyed most about their stay in Chiang Mai. Special thanks go to Aunty Yvonne, Uncle Martin Ziegler and Khun Win for organizing a wonderful end of year outing for BCMF patients to The Royal Flora Garden. These patients got to enjoy the beautiful environment and stunning orchids and a joyous day was had by all!



With many sub-projects planned and with a new load of wheelchairs from Perth arriving, the start of 2016 will be challenging. One of the most notable changes will be a shifting BCMF team in its main office. At the end of the quarter, one of our staff, Amelia King, moved on from BCMF. Amelia first started as a self-funded volunteer for 6 months, then she joined the BCMF team as permanent staff and stayed for over a year. Amelia was valued addition to our team and we are thankful for her efforts in her time as Advocacy Officer. Amelia worked closely with our partners and supporters both from Burma and international communities, and was integral to the establishment of our wheelchair program and our expansion into Burma. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to her dedicated service and we wish her best for her future endeavors.

Patients

The two patients chosen this quarter are pertinent examples of people who have been unable to access treatment due to the disproportionate cost of health care in Burma. Without treatment, these patients would have lived a severely decreased quality of life, or even died prematurely.

Patient Spotlight: Mon

Mon is a 3 month old baby boy with an encephalocele on the back on his head. His families are from Jain village outside Kawkareik, Karen State, Burma.

Ten years ago, Mon's parents moved to Bangkok for better jobs. In Bangkok, Mon's father worked as a construction worker and he earned 250 baht (7 USD) per day. However, the work was not consistent and was dependant on the availability of construction projects. When Mon's mother fell pregnant with him, she and his father moved back to Jain village in Burma and they have been living there ever since. In Burma, his father is not working and his mother is selling snacks. She works everyday and earns about 2,000 – 3,000 kyat (around 2 USD) per day.



Mon was delivered with no complications in the family home with the assistance of a midwife. Following the birth, his family noticed a little bump on the back of his head. The midwife advised them to go to Yangon to see a surgeon, but when Mon was 3 days old his skin turned yellow so he was taken to the hospital in Kyondoe. Kyondoe is a one small country town with limited medical facilities. He was admitted for 3 days and the family had to pay 50,000 kyat (39 USD). During the stay, he received phototherapy for jaundice. During this treatment, Mon developed a wound on the

enlarging bump on his head and fluid started to seep from the wound. Since that time, the encephalocele has been growing larger and fluid continues to seep.

When Mon was 1 month old, his parents took him to a hospital in Yangon. The doctor that examined Mon said his was too young to undergo surgery and that he should be at least 6 months old. The family went back home again. The trip to Yangon took 9 hours and they had to pay 8,000 kyat (6 USD) per person for the bus ride.

Mon was crying a lot and experienced pain if something touched the bump. His mother thought that he was in a lot of pain, so she went to the midwife in their village for help. The midwife advised them to go to Mae Tao Clinic for further support. The family borrowed 90,000 kyat (70 USD) to able them to travel to Mae Tao Clinic that took about 2 hours and cost 16,000 kyat (12 USD) for Mon and both his parents.

Mon was transferred to Chiang Mai hospital just 4 days after he arrived to Mae Tao Clinic. He received surgery 2 days later but he developed a fever due to the infection of his surgical wound. He stayed at the hospital for more than a month and was discharged when he fully recovered from the infection.

Mon's condition has been improving and he is now more active and he makes eye-contact with others. He is more lively and curious about the world around him. He now can lie down on his back without any pain.

His mother said, "I am so happy that we got the chance for this surgery. Now, I don't have to worry anymore and I am very happy to see my son with no more pain. Thank you so much!"



Patient Spotlight: Thiri

Thiri has endured cardiac conditions all 14 years of her life. She lives with her parents and older sister, age 23, in Hlaing Tha Yar Township, Yangon Division, Myanmar. Presently, she is a 7th grade student who has difficulty keeping pace with her classes as her condition prevents her from daily attendance.

She was a premature baby, weighing very little and requiring a twenty-day stay in the "preemie" ward before release. The doctor alerted the mother that the child had a congenital heart condition, which the mother suspected as Thiri was having difficulty breathing and was listless.

Thiri visited the hospital many times in her first six years, usually with a fever, swollen lymph nodes, and difficulty breathing. On one occasion she was cyanotic with a bluish tinge to her skin. Generally, she was medicated and released. At this time, the physician recommended surgery to repair the heart defect. The projected cost for the procedure was more than the family could afford so the family hoped that the girl might qualify for free surgery, offered on occasions by surgical missions from other countries. The father generates the family's income, as he is a driver, earning 240,000 kyats/month (188 USD). Generally, the family has sufficient funds for daily expenses, and can set aside small savings, but they are unable to meet large medical or surgical expenses.



The family's life has centered on the Thiri with her deteriorating condition; her father's work schedule becomes very inconsistent as he has to deliver her to the various hospitals and clinics. The mother mentioned that health care was improving in Burma, since some tests such as the echocardiogram were provided free of charge and there was better equipment in the hospitals; however, hospital costs are beyond the reach of most people from Burma.

Yangon General Hospital provided an echocardiogram (free of charge) in November 2015 that diagnosed the girl's defect as right ventricular hypertrophy with moderate pulmonary stenosis. Uncertain as to how long Thiri would have to wait to obtain a free surgery, the family decided to come into Mae Sot, Thailand. After former Burma Children Medical Fund patient had told the family of BCMF's mission to facilitate surgical care for people from Burma.

Currently, Thiri is very tired, easily exhausted walking, experiencing chest pain and spends most of her time sitting quietly. She likes to read and watch cartoons on television. She hopes "to become a doctor to help others like herself with their problems".

BCMF Program Statistics
October – December 2015

	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
Total number of new cases across the program	66	96
Children- BCMF	18	34
Children- CDF	10	21
Adult- BAMF	19	26
Gynecological cases – BWMF	19	15
Diagnoses		
Cardiac Disease	12	32
Obstetric/Gynecological Condition	20	15
Gastrointestinal Condition	6	11
Severe Burns	1	10
Urological/Kidney Condition	10	6
Neurological Condition	5	5
Congenital Musculoskeletal Deformity	1	4
Blood Disorder	1	4
Orthopedic Condition	1	3
Eye Condition	2	3
Benign Growth/Benign Tumor	6	2
Other	1	1
Ancillary Support	18	24
Wheelchair		
Patient's home state/division		
Karen State	34	59
Tak Province	17	21
Mon State	5	8
Mandalay Division	0	3
Ayeyarwady	1	2
Kachin State	0	1
Bago Division	7	1
Yangon	0	1
Shan State	0	0
Sagain	0	0
Rakhine	0	0
Thailand	2	0