

# Rafiki Surgical Missions

## Habari Gani

SEPTEMBER 2014

What's new from Rafiki Surgical Missions

### 2014 RAFIKI BALL

The 11th Annual Rafiki Ball was our biggest yet and raised more than \$120,000 to fund Rafiki Surgical Missions' work in Tanzania. Nearly 500 guests enjoyed letting loose during a fun-packed night of food, drinks and dancing at the Grand Ballroom, Crown Perth.

A highlight of the night was Andrew Miller's speech, which was entertaining but also powerful - well done Andrew, thank you so much.

Auctioneer Frank Torre got the bidders excited about the amazing items up for grabs, which included flights, accommodation and luxury yacht hire in Phuket; two business class tickets with Qatar; Austal Sea Trials; a Di Taylor painting; a beautiful tanzanite and diamond necklace and earrings from Stefan the Diamond Centre; and a

"cooking school" experience with Manu Feidel.

The Mel Crothers Trio, Tanzanian Choir and Flash Nat and the Action Men kept us entertained all evening and the ballroom and silent auction looked awesome thanks to Matt Milford from Bridal Creations.

Our graphic design and on-screen presentations were donated by Myriad Images and long-time supporter Peter Yeoman from Graphic Source provided all our printed material.

A massive thank you to everyone who attended the ball, very kindly donated auction items and assisted with the set up and preparations; without your help the night wouldn't have been possible. A

personal thank you to our MC, Blake Johnson, our auctioneer, Frank Torre and sponsors Stefan the Diamond Centre, Corporate Traveller, Qatar Airways, Lalla Rookh Bar & Eating House, The Larder and Knee Deep Winery.

Finally, thank you to our tanzanite sponsors, Cradle Resources Limited and AusGroup Limited and our gold sponsors V & V Walsh and Murcia Pestell Hillard.

A heap of photos were taken on the night by Michelle Karas Photography and are able to be viewed on [our Facebook page](#) 'Rafiki Surgical Missions' so please visit and 'like' our page.

Click on the links below for more photos.

[photo album part one](#)

[photo album part two](#)



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## MISSION UPDATE – APRIL SURGICAL MISSION

Our first surgical mission for 2014 took place from the 4th to the 18 April, at Sekou Toure Hospital in Mwanza.

The clinic on the first day was extremely busy, the team saw 79 patients and completed a total of 54 procedures over 10 days. The operations were made up of 16 burns related injuries, 20 cleft lip and/or palate repair and the remaining 18 cases included a six hour operation for Malignant Hypermastia and a six hour operation on a large Neurofibroma which was a massive achievement over the 10 days of surgeries.

We wish to thank Sekou Toure Hospital for its assistance, in particular for making its facilities available to us during the mission, and its staff for their continued support. We also wish to thank Geita Gold for their remarkable work, especially in sourcing and transporting patients, providing nutritional meals for patients and in assisting with translating and generally running of the clinic. Finally a big thank you to Matthew Hansen, Anthony Williams, Ross Boulter, Andrew Miller, Alice Haydon, Mellisa Chambers, James Smith, Shannon Muir, Taka Wild and Mardi Hatch for volunteering their time and skills in making this mission such a success.



## OCTOBER SURGICAL MISSION

Plans are already well under way for our next surgical mission that will be heading off to Sekou Toure Hospital in Mwanza from 24 October – 7 November 2014. The team will consist of James Savundra, Brigid Corrigan, Andrew Wild, Steve Hilmi, David Crocker, Alice Haydon, Shannon Muir, Peta Sherriffs, Vivienne Bilsborough and Taka Wild. We wish the team well and look forward to providing everyone with an update in the next newsletter.

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## VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Andrew and Carolyn Bellamy were the winning bidders of the Volunteer Experience auction item at the 2013 Ball. Carolyn spent a week volunteering with the team during the last mission and wrote about her trip on a blog. The blog is an amazing insight into the work of the team and written with so much heart, it's an incredible read. Here is a snippet from the blog.

"What an incredible day - I am still processing what I have seen today and am totally in awe of our wonderful team.

Straight after breakfast we took delivery of all the gear that has been stored here in Tanzania, the guys sorted it and prepared surgery kits for tomorrow, before preparing what we needed for today's clinic. As we arrived at the hospital we could see the huge group waiting; they had all been brought from the rural community by Geita Gold and will stay for two weeks, camping out at the hospital. As the team approached there were hugs all round and then Alice spotted Charlie - Charlie was a patient two years ago who lost his whole family in a house fire - Alice and Taka could not believe Charlie's smile. He was with Vinney a doctor from Uganda who had brought Charlie down and told us how happy he was and how loved he is - those of us who hadn't met him before instantly fell for him too.

The clinic is where the prospective patients are seen for the first time, their details are taken, they are weighed, and then photographed in one room before being passed on to be

assessed by the surgeons and anaesthetists. I spent most of the day in the first screening room photographing the patients but could not help but follow some of the cases into the next room.

We saw 46 and the team are now busy scheduling 36 operations from their work today. The majority were mostly cleft lips and pallets or burn contractures (i.e. where a burnt hand closes right up rendering it unusable). Burns are so common as they cook on open fires and the babies don't know to keep away. We saw so many today with terrible contractures, although not many raw burns that the team have seen before. We saw three of the most beautiful girls today with growths that will amaze you; Eliza whose mouth was totally mis-shapen, Bisia with a perfect egg on the top of her head who has the features of a super model and the amazing Rose who I will write more about who is just 15 and came on her own, she has such a huge growth she can hardly see out of one eye and has taught herself how to strap the thing up under a head scarf by literally pulling it out of the way...."

To read Carolyn's full blog go to <http://tanzaniarafiki.blogspot.com.au>



Pictured left: Carolyn with Irene waiting for surgery.  
Pictured right: the reunion with Charlie



# Rafiki Surgical Missions

## VOLUNTEER PROFILE: BRIGID CORRIGAN

*Dr Brigid Corrigan is a Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon and has been involved with Rafiki since Mission #13 to Tanzania in 2010. She has since volunteered her time and skills by traveling on missions in 2011, 2013 and is preparing for the next mission to Tanzania next month in Mwanza. Rafiki has been fortunate enough to have Brigid involved for the past 5 years and her continued support on missions and attending our annual balls to raise awareness and funds for the charity is greatly appreciated.*

### How did you choose to get involved with Rafiki?

When I trained in plastic surgery I was keen to get involved in overseas volunteer work at the end of my training. When I came back to Perth after my fellowship Tony Baker asked me if I was interested in going on a Rafiki mission and I've been involved ever since.

### What does this work mean to you?

Personally it's extremely rewarding. I feel extremely lucky to have had the opportunities I've had in Australia and I'm reminded of this on every mission. I really enjoy my work as a plastic surgeon but it's particularly satisfying in Mwanza as procedures that we would consider relatively straight forward can make a huge difference to our patients lives and without Rafiki they wouldn't have access to treatment. For example we do lots of cleft lip repairs which changes a child from having a disfiguring deformity to a near normal appearance.

### What was your most challenging operation?

A lot of the challenging cases have been burns cases. Burns are relatively common because most people cook on open

fires and treatment for burns is usually restricted to wound care and dressings. This means we see a lot of patients with severe burn

contractures after their burns have healed.

One of these cases was a 10 year old boy who had had severe burns to the backs of his legs which had resulted in severe contracture at his knee joints with his knee joints in fixed flexion and his heels touching the backs of his thighs. He was unable to walk and got around on his hands. We were able to release the contractures and do extensive skin grafts. He needed a further operation and more skin grafts by the next team, but after two operations he was able to walk again.

### What is your favourite memory from your trips to Tanzania?

I have lots but most of them relate to the people I have met on the trips, both other team members who are usually a great bunch of people, staff at Sekou Toure hospital who are always very welcoming and the patients who have taught me a lot about life in Tanzania.



## CONTAINERS OF MEDICAL EQUIPMENT & LAPTOPS

Since our last newsletter update in December, another five, 40 foot containers and a 20 foot container of equipment have been transported to Tanzania. These containers included hospital beds, mattresses, wheelchairs, defibrillators and other supplies which arrived in Tanzania between March and July. The equipment was distributed to various hospitals and schools in remote areas in Tanzania. Thank you to all of the volunteers that have come down and assisted with the packing of the containers as without you this wouldn't be possible.

We are also looking for anyone that has an old, but still functioning, computer or laptop that they would be willing to donate to Tanzania. We have some very worthy schools in Tanzania that do not currently have any computers so the benefit of providing these schools with a PC would be astounding! Preferably we would need a laptop with charger or a PC with a screen, keyboard and mouse and have the hard drive wiped besides the Microsoft package.

If you have a PC or would like to help us out with packing containers please contact Lily on [info@asanterafiki.com.au](mailto:info@asanterafiki.com.au)



# Rafiki Surgical Missions

## VOLUNTEER PROFILE: THOSE GUYS

*Glenn Bell, Brad Jolly, Grant Bell, Ken Bell, Steve Bell, Peter Bell, and Darren Gordon have been playing basketball together for quite a few years now, and their team, "Those Guys", got involved in packing containers from the very beginning. Having a bunch of two metre tall volunteers to help Rafiki pack medical equipment into containers to be sent to Tanzania is a tremendous help, especially when stacking those beds five high! Since 2010, they have helped us pack 32 containers of equipment and continue to assist with setting up at our annual Rafiki Balls and are always there to give us a hand when required. Maybe it's part of their basketball training?*

### How and when did you all become involved with Rafiki?

We started playing basketball together in about 2002-2003 in a veteran's competition, and 4 - 5 years later Didier asked if we could help move "some" hospital beds for Rafiki. As it turns out there were some 40 beds plus a mountain of donated, surgical gowns, wheel chairs, operating tables etc etc. Since then we have been striving for the magical 6 stack of beds in a container. It never gets tiring but each time we finish filling a container someone always says "Hate to be the person standing in front of the door when the locks are popped".

### What does this mean for you?

We have also been regulars at the Rafiki Ball each year. One year in particular the intro video was pretty confronting with images of before and after shots of surgical patients, it opened my eyes a little wider to understand that my 1 percent of effort makes 200 percent difference.

It is great to see the old equipment being put to good use and allowing a better standard of health care to be provided to those in need in Tanzania.

### What keeps you all coming back?

Knowing that a little bit of effort goes a very long way makes a substantial difference in the care of people who either cannot afford it or is not available to them. Also the opportunity to help others in

need and the comradery with all the other volunteers. The team takes pride in the challenge of finding the best way to fit as much equipment into the containers as possible in the shortest amount of time. During the process there is always time for a healthy debate on strategy and many laughs along the way.

### Would you encourage other groups to get involved?

We would highly recommend other groups get involved in Rafiki. The satisfaction of seeing the equipment being put to good use and so many people benefiting is very rewarding. It is also great to see the reports from the medical teams on the surgical missions showing how they have made a positive difference to so many lives.



# Rafiki Surgical Missions

## VALE

Sadly, one of our greatest supporters and friends, Hassan Dhala, passed away in July. Hassan was an enthusiastic supporter of Rafiki Surgical Missions since its very inception, always rounding up support in Tanzania, inviting people to his house to show them the latest Rafiki videos and achievements, and generally offering great hospitality whenever anyone was in Dar es Salaam.

Through his company, Freight Forwarders Tanzania, Hassan looked after all our equipment, ensuring it was well cared for and delivered to wherever our team was working. Freight Forwarders also handled all our port clearances and in-country transport for the many containers of medical equipment we sent to Tanzania. Hassan and Freight Forwarders have been our greatest supporters and sponsors, and instrumental to all we do in Tanzania.

He leaves behind his wife Zulobia, and daughters Khatidja and Khairunissa.



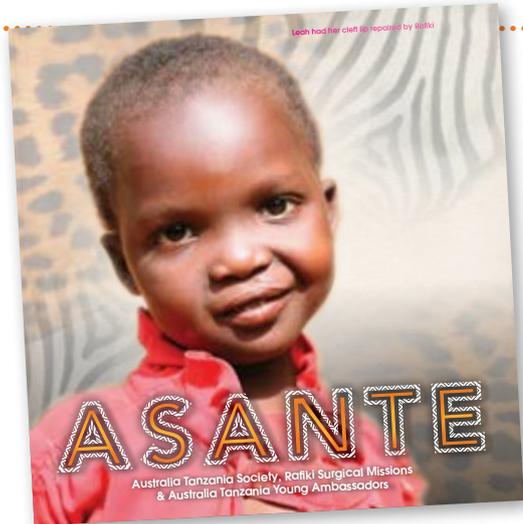
*Pictured : Hassan with wife Zulobia, and daughter Khatidja*

## DONATIONS

Information in relation to making a donation to Rafiki can be obtained from our website [www.asanterafiki.com](http://www.asanterafiki.com) or alternatively please contact Lily Balfour on +61 8 9221 0033 or [info@asanterafiki.com](mailto:info@asanterafiki.com)

## JOIN OUR MAILING LIST

If you would like to join our mailing list or need to update your contact details then please email Lily at [info@asanterafiki.com](mailto:info@asanterafiki.com)



## 'ASANTE' BOOK FOR SALE

'Asante' tells the story of Rafiki and Australia Tanzania Society to date, with heaps of photographs and information.

The books are available for purchase for \$25. Please email Lily at [info@asanterafiki.com](mailto:info@asanterafiki.com) to purchase a copy.

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