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Media Advisory

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National Cleft and Craniofacial Awareness & Prevention Month Highlights Blessings in Disguise: Thriving with a Facial Birth Defect

- Chapel Hill Mayor Mark Kleinschmidt Proclaims July 2012 **Cleft and Craniofacial Awareness Month**
- **Cleft Palate Foundation** Honors Teen with Cleft Lip and Palate
- Fair Trade Retailer **Ten Thousand Villages** Declares “Blessings in Disguise” Cleft Palate Foundation Awareness Day, July 26, 2012



“I don’t look at my experience as a curse, nor do I want people to be sympathetic; I look at my time spent as a patient in pediatrics as a blessing.”

So says Karly Terrell, recent high school graduate, bound for Montana State University this fall to pursue pediatric medicine.

She won a \$500 national scholarship from Chapel Hill’s Cleft Palate Foundation. Having gone through several surgeries early in life to correct her cleft lip and palate birth defect, Terrell knows she can relate to kids in similar situations. Reflecting on life lessons she’s learned, Terrell singled out “being confident in who you are and not letting anyone or anything change you.”

Graduating with a 3.8 grade point average, Terrell is living proof that having a facial birth defect places no limits on having a full life. Her interests run the gamut, from raising pigs and judging horses as a member of the Future Farmers of America program to singing in choir, tennis and dance. She spends as much time on stage performing as she does in a pen raising farm animals.

Cleft Lip and Palate Most Frequently Occurring Birth Defects

One out of every 600 newborns or 7000 babies per year are born with clefts in the United States. Infants born with clefts and other craniofacial conditions usually require not only surgery, but also special feeding equipment, dental and orthodontic care, and speech therapy as they grow.

It Takes a Team

This complexity of services is best provided in a coordinated manner over a period of years by an interdisciplinary cleft and craniofacial team comprised of professionals from a variety of healthcare disciplines. North Carolina teams include:

- UNC Craniofacial Center , University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill
www.dentistry.unc.edu/patient/craniofacial/
- Duke Cleft Palate-Craniofacial Team , Duke University Medical Center-Durham
www.dukechildrens.org
- NC Center for Cleft & Craniofacial Deformities , Wake Forest University School of Medicine-
Winston Salem www1.wfubmc.edu/plastic/

CLEFTLINE™: Hope and Help are on the line = information within 24 hours.

From the day a child is born, straight through to adulthood, the Cleft Palate Foundation (CPF) www.cleftline.org is a one-stop resource for families affected by cleft lip and palate and other craniofacial birth defects. CPF --

- provides comprehensive [information](#) to educate patients, families, and professionals;
- makes [referrals](#) to cleft/craniofacial treatment teams;
- offers telephone and online counseling and support service through the Cleftline 1-800-24-CLEFT (800-242-5338);
- grants [research](#) to learn all we can about prevention and care;
- hosts the [Connections Conference](#) for Families, Caregivers, and Patients;
- provides kids with **Cleftline™** [Teddy Bears](#) that have repaired cleft lips;
- advocates for family-centered team care;
- funds [scholarships to healthcare professionals](#) each year; and,
- awards \$500 [college scholarships](#) each year to young adults affected by cleft and craniofacial birth defects.

“Blessings in Disguise” Cleft Palate Awareness Day at Ten Thousand Villages

Thursday July 26, 2012, 4p-8pm

CPF is very grateful to partner with fair trade retailer **Ten Thousand Villages** on Thursday, July 26th for “Blessings in Disguise”, a special event from 4pm- 8pm. The public is invited for shopping, refreshments, and live music with 15% of store sales benefitting the Cleft Palate Foundation.

Cleftline™ Bears will also be on sale. The **Cleftline™ Bears** project aims to help children cope with the questions and anxiety they may experience from having facial differences. Each GUND™ bear is custom-made with stitches across its upper lip and a tag encouraging the children to name their bear that is special just like they are. **Cleftline™ Bears** are also an excellent tool for teaching all children about acceptance of facial differences. Shoppers can purchase their own bear or write a note and send the bear to a child going in to or recovering from surgery.

Ten Thousand Villages is a nonprofit fair trade retailer striving to improve the livelihood of artisans in 38 countries. Product sales help pay for food, education, healthcare and housing for thousands of artisans who would otherwise be unemployed or underemployed. **Ten Thousands Villages** is located at Eastgate Shopping Center, 1800 E. Franklin St., Chapel Hill. www.chapelhill@stores.tenthousandvillages.com , 919-929-8022.

Please visit Cleftline.org for more information and to donate securely online.